THE MAHABHARATA

AS IT WAS, IS AND SHALL BE

A CRITICAL STUDY

By Promatha Nath Mullick, M.R.A.S.

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BY

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CALCUTTA

AUTHOR OF

"THE HISTORY OF THE VAISYAS OF BENGAL"

"ORIGIN OF CASTE," ETC.

"What we can watch and study in India better than anywhere else is, how religious thoughts and religious language arise, how they gain force, how they spread, changing their forms as they pass from mouth to mouth, from mind to mind, yet always retaining some faint contiguity with the spring from which they rose at first."

Prof. F. Max Muller's Hibbert Lectures, III.

MAHARAJA BIR BIKRAM COLLEGE LIBRARY. Agartala.

FIRST EDITION

CALCUTTA

1934

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR BY THE PIONEER PRESS, ALLAHABAD.

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K. L. MUKHO
G. P. C. L
CALCUTTA.

DEDICATED TO THE IDEAL GOD

NARAYANA

THE VEDIC INTERPRETERS

AND

THE IDEAL EPIC AVATARS

SRI RAMA CHANDRA

AND

SRI KRISHNA

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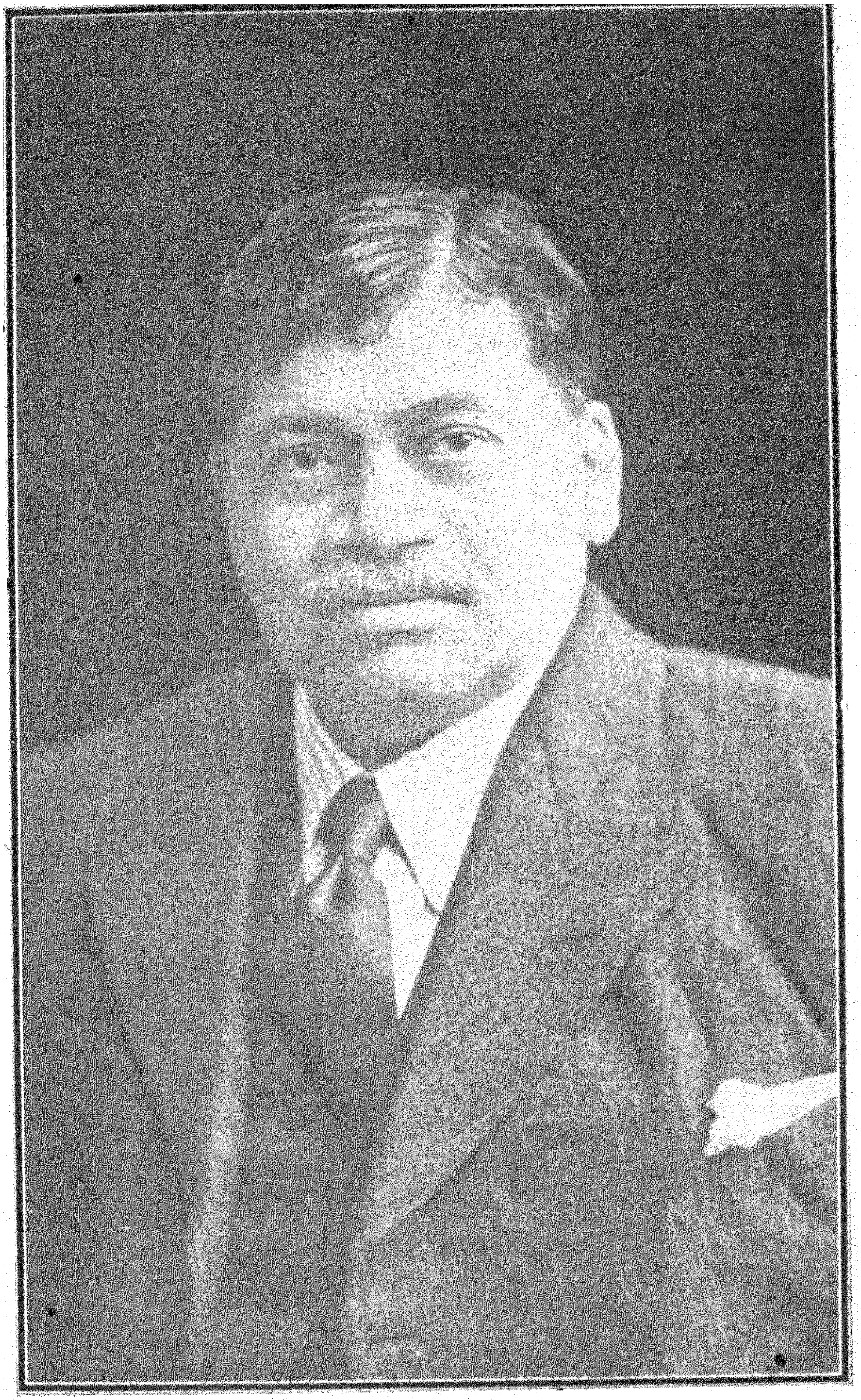

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

The world takes a great interest in the themes of the Indian Epics and the learned men of Europe have criticised them in their works. It is only natural that in Indians these vile and unjustifiable calumnies against certain venerable and noble characters of their Epics give rise to great pain. It is, therefore, the sacred duty of an Indian to disabuse the minds of students of the Indian Epics of many current erroneous notions. It must be said that by Western education Indian students have become unable to comprehend their own ancient forefathers, with the result that in almost all cases they have lost all power of initiative and have learnt only to re-echo Western views and findings.

It is impossible for anyone to pose as an expounder or discoverer of the truths and mysteries mixed up in the Epics without first discussing briefly all the important questions of ancient Indian civilisation and history, as well as of worship, in all their bearings on the Epics, especially when one is fully aware of the great difficulties arising from the controversial nature of some of the issues, which have raised considerable doubt in the minds of well-known Western scholars like Professor Max Muller and others. The task is almost superhuman, for one has first to discover and sift all the materials and facts which have any bearing on these subjects. A standard and a starting point are necessary for every measurement and appraisement. It is only fair and right, in the circumstances, that I should place before my readers what I have learnt from the revelations made by the texts of the Epics themselves and the light I have derived by touching the negative and positive switches on the vast switchboard of the Hindu Sanskrit literature of Philosophy, Purana and Law, as well as the different sections of the Epics, growing with the progress of time.

Human knowledge is limited, and the method of acquiring it is found in human nature. A child is not ashamed to ask questions about things he does not know, and he repeats what he learns before he masters it. One cannot swim unless one goes beyond one's depth. The study of the Indian Epics in all their details means a lifelong task. The results of my study were placed before the learned Societies of India who are authorities on the subject. I contributed articles on the subject and visited Benares, Poona, etc., to present my conclusions on the various knotty points of the Epics. These secured

wide approval, and leading Sanskrit Scholars of Benares, like the late lamented Mahamahopadhaya Shiva Kumar Sastri, in recognition of my original researches in this direction conferred on me the title of "Bharatabanibhusana."*

Dr. Sukthanker, the learned Editor of the Critical Edition of the Mahabharata, requested me in writing to publish a book, being impressed with the discussion I had with him.

"Your views are so interesting, and your study of the Mahabharata is evidently so profound that you ought to write a book stating your views and giving the world of scholars the benefit of your erudition. I hope you will fully state in your book why and how you disagree with the views of Western scholars. Such a book is urgently needed and will be keenly appreciated, at best in India, if not all over the world."

He was good enough to ask me to give a public lecture† and discuss the matter with the learned members of the well-known Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute of Poona. I did, when I went to Poona to give evidence before the Central Banking Enquiry Committee there in 1930. I tried to impress upon the members of the Bhandarkar Society the importance of establishing the real original incidents and plot of the great Epic, illustrating some of them there, so that the original texts and characters might be joined together divested of the subsequent interpolations and additions made under the specious plea of adapting it to the march of the times and the tastes of the public. There was a long and lively discussion and I satisfactorily met all the points raised by the learned Dr. Sukthanker, Rao Bahadur Vaidya and other learned men assembled at the Poona meeting.

The bedrock of the Indian Epics seems to have been religious worship, philosophy, theology and love rather than history, politics, art or science as is found in the Western world. The study of the characters of the Indian Epics, with the incidents of their lives and the truths and lessons they preach, is the all important question, and not the popular view of them. The owner, user and builder are more interested in the real usefulness, elegance and comfort of the internal arrangement of a building than in the mere external appearance and the beauty of

*Translation from Sanskrit :—"In appreciation of his great attachment for and long and arduous labours on *Mahabharata*, coupled with a great devotion for Sree Krishna, and being greatly delighted to find him possessed of such good qualities in this ruinous Kali Age, when, being possessed of great wealth, youth, opportunities and temptations, he could be drawn away elsewhere, we confer the title of "Bharat-Bani-Bhusan" on Promotho Nath Mulick of noble character.

Mahamahopadhaya Sib Kumar Sarma Misra,

Mahamahopadhaya Chandra Bhusan Sarma,

Mahamahopadhaya Anantaram Sarma and others,

†Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, Report for 1930-31, Page 27, Para : 6.

its front elevation as seen by a spectator or bystander. This may be averred with equal truth of the Epic structure. It is well-known that there cannot be any close resemblance between the East and the West.

In ancient India religious education with theology and philosophy was highly developed. The Hindus owe their existence to the great ideals of morality, love, religion and spiritual excellence depicted in the Epics, but to others they convey very little information or inspiration. An illiterate Hindu even now understands and realises the connotation of truth, justice, piety and love by the name of Yudhisthira, filial piety and ideal kinghood by that of Ramchandra, fidelity by that of Sita, love by that of Draupadi, chastity by that of Sabitri, parental love by that of Dasaratha, fraternal love by that of Bharata or Lakshmana, chivalry by that of Arjuna, tyranny by that of Ravana and villany by that of Durjodhana.

It must be understood that whoever allows himself to be carried away by imagination or tries to put hosts of syllogisms to flight with a sneer is unable to grapple with facts from the internal evidence in the Epics themselves. Besides, one cannot confine oneself simply to the Epics themselves in re-valuing them, for the simple reason that they were meant for learned assemblies like the Cultured University of Sounaka or the royal sacrifices of ancient Kings of India. They were the manuals in popular garb, containing, as they do, the teachings of the Vedas and their religious sacrifices with theories and practices for the better and clearer understanding of the different subjects.

By resorting to all the material which has any bearing on the subject I have tried to gather light on this difficult subject and now endeavour to assist the students of the Epics to do likewise; and to spare them the tedious task of remembering and referring to all that literature themselves, I have put in brief resumes and sketches of all that material in this book. It appeared to me as a revelation of the mysteries of the Epics, and may appear as a re-valuation of the Epics to my readers.

Knowledge, unlike food, is not destroyed when it is made accessible to all and is thoroughly examined and developed with an exchange of views by learned people, a course which all sensible men welcome. This is the long and short of this undertaking. It is presented to the learned body of the world and, conscious as I am of my shortcomings in a task like this, I trust will be appreciated by them. Getting to grips with things as they really were from the early days of ancient civilisation up to the last days of Epic growth, has been no easy task. Theories of liberty and fraternity tried to keep dignity within proper bounds and

stood against absolute despotism. Everything, seemed to have been decided at the general assembly of religious sacrifices like Rajasuya and Asvamedha. The instinct of self-assertion is inherent in human nature, but the whole mind of India has been coloured with legalism from the days of King Vena. Autocracy was not tolerated. King Vena paid the penalty of being an autocrat. The caste system made an admirable subsidiary nursery for putting a stop to undue interference in the functions of a Brahmin and a Kshatriya by ambitious men like Parasurama and Visvamittra.

The doctrine of Karma, or the will of God, or Faith, has very little to do with the early Indian Epics. Such a doctrine is the growth of science, art and culture. Such a doctrine does not reflect the everyday life of ancient India. The ideas of self-improvement, self-accession and self-determination were identified with the Yoga system of Philosophy. There had been a gradual process of attainment in a series of lives and deaths, which the ancient law-givers could not realise. The Indian Epics depict that the national honour of a nation or its religious instinct was sought to be preserved on the battlefield by great kings, who were loved and deified. Eventually this was sought to be done by incarnations of gods being invoked in a sacrificial fire. Here one is often struck by a curious air of unreality—the object to be attained had been lost sight of in the process of attainment. This made the task of unravelling the truth from the fiction in Epic literature all the more difficult. The Indian Epics demonstrate the characteristic traits of the early Aryan mind in ancient India, on which the different stages of Hindu Society ultimately developed in all their phases.

That these facts may be better understood, this lifelong labour of a student of the Mahabharata is presented to the cultured world in the hope that it will be appreciated.

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INTRODUCTION.

Hinduism has marched through the ages, almost unaffected by external onslaughts, and the nations of the world have evinced interest in the history of its growth, expansion, decadence and revival. Science gives trained heads to unearth the past, but a new heart with a new spirit is an even greater necessity. Nothing escapes the prodding touch of modern research, and clever men think that all the mysteries of the universe lie naked before their eyes. The stories in books of religion are thought of as nothing but fairy tales or allegories, and God as but the spirit of humanity. God is forgotten in an age where doubt and scepticism is the order of the day. Everyone assumes that his success in life is due to his own energy, perseverance, ability, shrewdness or good luck. On the battlefield, in courts of law and in gambling booths people ascribe results to Satan or to God. Beyond this the majority of the people find no positive proof of the real existence of God in Heaven or the divine law and nothing to fear in the day of judgment. There are now more lovers of pleasure than of God. Character is no longer the test of fellowship. Men are devoting all their energies to becoming splendid players and sportsmen, but how few care to look into His face who, as the creator and author of science, philosophy and everything, alone can solve the great questions of the day. Hope springs eternal.

The increasing facilities for intercommunication between various nations and the opportunities of studying one another's languages and religions have led to an ever increasing appreciation of the ancient civilisation of India and its literature, culture and religion. The more they pry into and study the ancient civilization and culture of India the more they are struck by the gigantic dimensions, excellence and the abiding and enduring character of Hindu Sanskrit Literature. Everything in India has been on a colossal scale: its mountains, its rivers, its wealth—both spiritual and material—and its literature—Veda, Vedanta, Upanishad, Epics, Dramas, etc. They breathe the social, religious and cultural development of ages. Many Western savants have approached the study of Indian literature and religious books from a western point of view, and they have been followed by Indian scholars, adoring them but without having the courage to see for themselves if the former were right or wrong. Almost all the ancient religions of the world yielded or succumbed to extraneous onslaughts, but Hinduism has stood like a

monument amidst the buffets and storms of invading hordes from time immemorial. Conquering hordes have come and gone, foreign religions have been tried, Hindu religion and its temples have been persecuted and desecrated, other religions have been sought to be imposed upon it, but it is a marvel that the Hindu religion has proudly reared its head and stood its ground very nearly in the same form from those ages whose history is lost in the dim twilight of oblivion and mythical legends down to the present day.

The earliest structure of Hindu Society and religion rests on the Veda; but the Veda was a sealed book to the common people both on account of its inaccessibility to the latter as well as its extreme condensation and unintelligibility. As time wore on, from one Veda four Vedas grew, and their interpretations assumed the name of the fifth Veda, for the common and unlearned people, as the Bharata Samhita, which afterwards developed into the great Indian Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The Vedas and the great Indian Epics form the foundation and corner-stones on which the whole fabric of Hindu religion and society rest and have rested, unaffected by the thousand external influences and misfortunes of foreign domination to which any other religion in the world would have succumbed. It is the innate truth and intrinsic merit of the philosophy and tenets of the Hindu religion that has preserved it in its pristine glory from the ravages of time and misfortune.

It is a principle of Mechanics that what is gained in power is lost in distance or *vice-versa*. The Hindu sages from the most ancient times have been given to spiritual meditations in preference to worldly pursuits, and their austere habits of life and meditation produce in them a frame of mind best fitted to evolve a true philosophy of life and religion. Thus, what the Hindus lost in material and political advancement and prestige, they gained in spiritual power and splendour. These sages have handed to us the revealed Vedas, the Upanishads, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Purans, the magnitude and vastness of the quantity and the excellence of the quality of which have at once been the admiration, envy and enigma of the whole world. The Vedas and Upanishads belong to periods permitting only occasional peeps into history, and it is from the two Indian Epics that something like history can be interwoven from the warp and woof of legendary accounts and mythological history.

The modern scientific world applies the yardstick to the progress of time and civilisation in deciphering the past history of a nation, which cannot raise its head owing to the degradation and poverty to

which it is reduced by reason of ages of subjugation. Scientific scrutiny is fast becoming a fine art and men indulge freely in a war of tongue and pen. Man without culture and education is worse than a beast. A beast cannot invent mischief like a man. The tongue has no bones, yet it is stronger than iron. It is a sword that some never let rest. God has fenced it in with two rows of teeth and lips. A wicked tongue kills three—he who tells a lie, he about whom it is told, and he to whom it is told. But where the heart is humble, the tongue is charitable. Most of man's sins are in his words. Education and association teach men how to place a check on their tongues. It is for this reason that some people observe silence for a certain period as a disciplinary measure and it is included as a part of the Yoga system of philosophy.

The ancient people had not the facilities of writing and printing. There was a time when men connected with religious and philanthropic works alone were highly respected and their names, illustrating charity or some abstruse principle of religion, were alone thought worthy of mention in the history culled from ancient oral traditions and legends. Places connected with great events of the past became famous and commemorative of the incidents and in a way served the purpose of history. If it was connected with any religious ceremonies, as the birthplace of any great man or as the place of emancipation of any great soul, it became sacred. Some find God associated with past events or with the awe-inspiring temples or monasteries. To defend their Holy place thousands of crusaders fought for years and even laid down their lives for religious merit.

A historian takes the utmost trouble to ascertain facts before embodying them in his book. In respect of a certain period he depicts the country and those citizens who are necessary for his theme. Great philosophers, scientists, politicians, who become eminent afterwards, are not mentioned if they are not connected with his theme. For this he should not be discarded as unauthentic. For instance, if he is writing the history of poets and dramatists, he cannot be concerned with the public men of the day in civil and military affairs and *vice-versa*. There are men who from ulterior motives employ all their energies and learning to discredit the life and works of a distinguished man who has worked to solve the difficult questions of religion and philosophy, and thereby attempt to upset the ingrained belief of the people.

As to the authorship of the Bharata Samhita, it is quite immaterial whether it is the work of one man or twenty different men—it is certain that the one man who edited it and published it was distinguished by a name. His admirers, it is only natural, will give him a miraculous birth and his detractors, on the contrary, will ascribe a low birth to him.

It is the way of the world that the birth and antecedents of great men are sought to be lowered by their detractors. The author of the Bharata Samhita was the offspring of Narayana himself, the Creator of the Universe. The followers of Rudra (Mahadeva) ascribe the birth of the author of the Mahabharata to that great God's boon, and their adversaries declare that he was the fruit of forbidden love between the virgin fisher-girl Gandhabati and the sage Parasara, when the latter saw her plying a boat on the river. In this way the detractors calumniated both the father and his great son, the greatest law-givers and sages of their time.

Cleanliness has become a substitute for godliness. Men and women have become more interested in fashions, entertainments and pleasures than in the solemn duties of society and religion to which they owe a duty for the sake of their culture, if not for their birth in the illustrious Aryan Race. Narayana was the name of a Vedic sage as also of the God who presided over Vedic Gods and from whom the Hindu trinity originated. Orthodox Hindus love the great religious book, the Bharata Samhita, for its honourable record of glorious events, for its past memories and associations, but it has been merged in the Mahabharata and has not been recovered.

All religious books of the nations of the world are said to have emanated from God himself and to have been revealed to his beloved prophets and worshippers, possibly to inspire implicit confidence and faith in the mind of the general public in the matters spoken of in the books of religion by the ancient seers. Hindus accept the Bharata Samhita as the revealed utterances of the Supreme God Narayana to the Celestial Minstrel Narada, and believe that the world was created by God Narayana himself through the fiat of his will with the active principles of the creation, the five elements—Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Sky, which were represented in the five senses of animal life. The Veda was the first revelation by the great Narayana. Those who had been taught by God Himself communicated their knowledge to others, until it was handed down from father to son through successive generations by oral traditions. The preparation of the written record began in the time of Vyasa. Inspired revelations were then embodied in an inspired book called the Bharata Samhita, from which the great Indian Epics developed.

The Bharata Samhita points to Narayana as its author from the source of "Hari Gita." It was preached by his devoted minstrel Narada. The infinite Narayana shed his light into the concentrated mind and heart of his devotee. The two Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, contain writings of different ages, but they are culled from the

same source, the Bharata Samhita, by persons differing widely in rank and occupation and in mental and spiritual endowments. The truth is brought out in its varied aspects as presented through different individuals. It is only natural, then, that the Mahabharata appears to the superficial, careless or prejudiced student as a heterogenous mass of discrepancy or contradiction with a clear contrast in style and diversity in the nature of the subjects and their treatment; but to a careful student with a clearer insight and knowledge of the subjects dealt with therein it will not be so. The Bharata Samhita must first be differentiated from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

The Bible underwent many revisions, and it is only natural that the same also took place with the Indian Epics. God's clock of prophecy is never too fast nor too slow. A remarkable prediction of the Machine Age was made by Daniel, as recorded in the last Chapter of the Bible, 'Prophecies.' The men of ancient Egypt, Rome and Greece were high in their standards of culture and art, but India was the pioneer in all these and, what is more, it was she who first taught Philosophy, Astronomy, and Astrology to the world. The Hindu Epics describe the Machine Age in the aeroplanes of Nala and Meghnada, radio and the wireless in the description of celestial domains demonstrated by Narada in his vivid description in the Epic; but half a century ago no one thought them possible even though people now daily enjoy them.

The controversy between truth and falsehood has existed from the very earliest times. In the Vedic Age men wandered in the woods and mountain fastnesses in search of what they desired. The trees, boughs and caves offered them shelter and protection; the flowing water appeased their thirst, cooled and cleansed their bodies; the fruits and vegetables maintained them with food; the sky above with its luminous bodies, the sun and the moon, shed different lights at day and at night for their work and rest; while the wind and the earth refreshed their lives with sleep. All these made them adore bounteous Nature, whom they at first worshipped.

Storm, thunder and lighting, fire, earthquake, flood and volcanic eruption made them first realise the powerful and fearful weapons of Nature. They had seen the boundless immensity of Nature in the ocean below and the sky above. Their instinctive human frailty and limitations naturally made them tremble with awe. They gladly offered whatever was dear and valuable in order to save themselves from destruction by the wrath of Nature.

Nature, which proved to them so bounteous and whom they worshipped by offering prayers, ceased to occupy the same place in their

heart of hearts, when they found Nature playing the part of a veritable engine of destruction. They wanted to worship someone who would correct and control that Nature, prevent it becoming unkind to them and make it continue to be bounteous. Thus the idea of God, or the existence of the One Supreme and Omnipotent, is connected with the creation and destruction of the Universe, and all religious books begin with descriptions of them. The idea of God was thus evolved out of love and fear. Indra, the King of Heaven, thus became the greatest of all Vedic Gods as the wielder of thunder and giver of rain. They began to dream of Heaven and Hell in their hard struggles of life and death. God seemed to them to be in possession of the Heaven above, where everything was enjoyable, contrary to what they had been experiencing in a Hell of misery.

The Veda records this origin of worship and sacrifice, the first form of religion with the masses, when religion through the path of knowledge was with the select few. These seers, who were men capable of traversing the region of mind through devotion and concentration, were thus distinguished from other people as being created by the fiat of the divine God Brahma. In Vedic sacrifices the Brahma (*i.e.* a man officiating as Brahma) was in charge of the essential part of the ceremony, the spirit of sacrifice, while the others were the actual performers. The institution of Vedic sacrifices was very popular and from them the people were made to realise the system of creation and its essential religion with the Brahma of the sacrifice as the essential centre of creation from whom the workers drew their inspiration. In a sacrifice the Brahma was not the actual performer but the superintendent over the actual performers, who felt assured that whatever would be wanting would be provided for by the Brahma. The idea of God thus came to be a haven of faith and confidence for the ultimate success and deliverance of the world's weary wayfarers.

Those were days in which the majority of the people lived from hand to mouth. They sought for what could provide them with food and drink just to prevent their immediate death and destruction. They were struck with the examples of the lives of the fortunate few, the favourite sons of the Creator, who offered all valuable possessions of the earth to the Omnipotent Creator to make them immune from ruin and disaster, and they were only too glad to follow their example in the best way they could.

The sun, the moon, the wielder of thunder, the master of oceans, the maker of storms, the creator of fire or the holder of the earth no longer seemed to be the presiding deities of life, the soul or energy of

creation and destruction. People began to think of one under whose obligation the sun, the moon and the stars rose and disappeared and for what purpose they were created, what caused their relations with the earth, the oceans, the wind and fire. This became the centre of their thought and meditation, till they found that there was a supreme God presiding over the creation of the animate and the inanimate world. They had worshipped thirty-three Gods who were but the different parts of the one great machinery of creation. It was the great builder God who conceived the creation and made each part do its definite work as a matter of obligation in relation to others, not dependant to any one except to their maker, who wound the machine and changed, replaced or repaired the main-spring and through whose skill and device the main machine moved or stopped, lived or decayed.

They found out the mistake of worshipping so many gods and began to realise the conception of one God, the master mind of the Universe. This has been the decentralisation of human service to the creator, the Almighty Father of the Universe. This has been the central pivot of the service to humanity in which the idea of finding the divinity in one's own self has been materialised, thus making a cultured man sacrifice anything, however dear and precious, for the service of humanity and for the good of the world. It has certainly been a great spur to effect the transformation of mind and soul and consolidate them under one banner with one creed of the divine conception of Narayana, the union of Atma and Paramatma, the great being under the name of Mahaparusha, the creator of the whole Universe. The Bharata Samhita made human beings think of the author who was instrumental in all creation. The question of creation and its author became the all important theme over Nature and its creator, or its presiding deities.

The Bharata Samhita records how the Vedic gods, Indra, Agni, Varuna, Rudra and Brahma accepted the divine Narayana as their Creator and Lord. The Brahmanas owed their origin to Brahma, the source of Vedic knowledge, truth and wisdom, who invoked the deities to fight the Asuras, who had usurped the rights and possessions of kings and their priests. How the Vedic seers, Vasistha, Vrihaspati, Agastya and Bhrigu encouraged the Devas to fight their powerful adversaries, the Asuras, by offering oblations to the divine Narayana to ensure success and glory, is recited in the Bharata Samhita. It relates how the Daksa Fajna ultimately culminated in the fight between the Devas, headed by the Hindu trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, under the Generalship of Indra, and led to the sacrifice of Dadhichi, persecution of Bhrigu and disappearance of Agastya.

Kapila, the great founder of Samkhya Philosophy and the expounder of the Narayana cult, created a great revolution in the religious world, which is described figuratively by the untimely deluge in the time of Swayambhuba Manu, his maternal-grandfather. The old theory of creation was exploded and gave place to the six systems of Hindu Philosophy. Those who had accepted boons from the Vedic gods met with their doom and destruction. Kartyabiryarjuna, the follower of Dattatreya, the reputed incarnation of Vishnu, was killed by Parasurama, a descendant of Bhrigu. Ravana, who owed his strength and eminence to the boon of Brahma, was defeated and killed with all his family by Rama. Rudra's effort to destroy Sukra and Cupid was foiled. Garuda, a descendant of Kasyapa and the carrier of Narayana, defeated Indra. The idea of the four stages of life and the four orders of the caste system, based on the preponderance in the proportion of the three inherent qualities, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas, which were represented in the Hindu trinity, were the outcome of the Narayana cult, as is clear from the Purusha Sukta of the Rigveda by sage Narayana, the patronymic of Nara. Kapila is recognised as an incarnation of Narayana in the Uttara Kanda of the Ramayana, where Ravana after his defeat at the hands of Kartyabiryarjuna and Mandhata, heard from Narada the glory of Narayana. He did not become a follower of Narayana but wanted to fight him, and was, at last, killed by Rama, the incarnation of Narayana.

The life of an anchorite was found incompatible with the task of race propagation. People realised that marriage was a social necessity founded on a spiritual basis to beget children and to propagate the religion of love. It was necessary that kings and their priests, in whose hands lay the establishing of spiritual influence, should have moral checks and restraints against lust, greed, enjoyment and covetousness. It was for this that the Vedic gods were discarded. Strict parental and royal authority were established and strict laws were promulgated at the sacrificial assembly with the sanction of the assembled kings, sages and the general public, who were duly informed of the causes which made it imperative to make the laws. Man's life was not long enough to enable him to learn everything by personal experience and to act accordingly. Civilisation is the product of the combined wisdom and experience of past ages. Wise law-givers and their followers laid down what was the best means of propagating the human race and preserving the highest aims of human institutions. Those who follow in the footsteps of the wise men of the past are wiser than those who want to learn everything by their own experience of things, and it pays by saving them from many a sorrow and pain if not a life long scar. Most

people are led into wrong by the mere fact that others do it, but forget one important fact, that someone younger, weaker and inferior will be influenced by their deeds, because examples are more powerful than precepts and serve as ideals to the illiterate.

The great religious sacrifices of the Indo-Aryans were soon exalted into social, educational and political institutions of very great importance, which at the time of the Bharata Samhita were directed towards finding out the true creator of the Universe, who was to be worshipped for the suppression of the growing evils of society. For this purpose, in each cycle of time, particular seers were elected to form the Council of wise men to decide questions of importance. Even the moral lapses of the Vedic gods were not spared, and they were dethroned by these wise men and the worship of the great soul of the universe, the "Mahapurusha" or Narayana, was introduced. They saw far in advance of their times. What they foresaw and preached are now spoken of by the Western savants. "The universe is but one vast symbol of God (Brahmanda)" says Carlyle, "what is man himself, but a symbol of God?" "Men are gods in embryo" is one of the fundamental and basic principles of the idea of eternal progression, *i.e.*, the great idea of man's unfolding towards godhead and immortality.

Kapila was the propounder of the Narayana cult in the very first Hindu cycle of time of Swayambhuba Manu. The Bharata Samhita was a book of record of Baibasvata Manu, incorporating the oral traditions of previous times, recited during the intervals of any great sacrifice. The Bharata Samhita was lost in the two well-known Indian Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, and formed their nucleus. Narayana Upanishads preach the connection of Narayana worship from the quotations of the Upanishads of all the four Vedas, and the Bharata Samhita elucidates the circumstances and incidents connected with its growth and expansion.

Brahma of the Hindu trinity preached to Rudra and other gods about the greatness and power of Narayana, to whom he ascribed their own origin and birth as well as that of the Universe.

The combined efforts of all the Vedic gods failed to subdue the great disciples of Narayana, Hirayana Kasipu, Bali, Vritrasura, until and unless the espouser of the cause of Dadhichi was sacrificed, and the wife of Bhrigu was killed by the sound of the fearful Nrisinghadeva and Bali was translated from Heaven to Patala, (Hades, the region under the earth) and the great King Nahusa was placed on the throne of Indra, the King of Heaven, for Indra's misconduct in the fight with his adversary. The great sage Bhrigu was at first annoyed with

the great God whose sound was responsible for his wife's death, but was converted into a follower of Narayana. The Rig Veda affords ample evidence of family kinship and the patriarchal type of family organisation. Angiras, the original ancestor of Vrihaspati and his brothers, established the worship of fire and is deified in the later portions of it.

The worship of ancestors was the very earliest form of worship and was called Pitrijajna and that of the gods of physical nature was called Devajajna. The name of Devajajna offers some just grounds for the reflection that from Yayati the kings were followers of Devajajna and religious kinship began to be more respected than family kinship. Madhabi, daughter of Yayati, was the mother of three lines of kings and wife of the great Viswamittra, one of the renowned Vedic sages who played a conspicuous part in the two Indian Epics. The origin of the word Father is very nearly the same in Sanskrit, Greek and Latin; it means primarily a protector in the languages mentioned *Janayitri* (Sanskrit), Genitor (Latin) and Generatal (Greek). The son in the family was then subordinate to the father in all respects, but the sons of Devajani, Jadu, Anu, Drahyu etc., were not obedient to their father and the mother was jealous of Sarmistha. The great hero of the Mahabharata, Sri Krishna, descended from the line of Jadu, who was disinherited by his father and was distinguished by the sign of the feet of Bhrigu on his breast. The Bharata Samhita deals with Devajajna, Pitrijajna and Dharmajajna and the translation of Yayati to heaven and his fall for his self-glorification, which was arrested not by his devoted son Puru but by his four grandsons, the great respectors of religion or Dharma. Kapila first stood against the sacrifice of animals and preached the true religion of the Veda.

King Mahabhisa was driven out of heaven for staring at the bare body of Ganga (Goddess of the river Ganges) and took birth as Santanu on earth. Pratip, the father of Santanu, who retired to the forest to practise religious austerities, was tried by Ganga but was found too strong to be overcome by passion. Her marriage with Santanu produced children who were sacrificed as soon as they were born. The father Santanu did not say a word when seven children were thus destroyed as agreed upon before the marriage, but when Ganga was about to repeat it on the eighth child King Santanu remonstrated with her and the latter disappeared and flowed as a river. The river Ganges is distinguished as Badhusara by Pratipa, which became the site of a shrine when the great Parasurama was absolved from sin by bathing in it, as referred to in the Paulama and Bana Parvas, but not explained clearly there with all the necessary allusion to the origin of the name of

Badhusara. The wives of King Bharata killed their sons when found incompetent and Bharadwaja the product of incestuous connection between Brihaspati and the wife of his brother Utathya, succeeded to the throne, as the King took the son from the woods where he was thrown by the mother Mamata, when Brihaspati refused to take and maintain him.

That was a time when moral obligation to religion was considered higher than the social bond and relationship which love and affection inspire. The wealth of the early Aryan people consisted of valiant sons, horses and cattle, without which domestic worship and the integrity and prestige of the family or the king could not be maintained. The raising of a son was a matter of religion as the ancestors would not accept libation at the hands of one who was not of their blood. The Bharata Samhita tried to prove with the words of Narayana that there was very little difference between the Pitrijajna and Devajajna and the offerings go to the great God Narayana. The Aryans dispersed from India continued to worship the sun, etc., the forces of nature and their dead ancestors, in Babylon, Persia, Rome and Greece.

It will not be out of place here to quote the history of Christianity in the way the birth of Karna was sought to be excused in the judgment of men. The name Elagabalus is the Syrian appellation of the sun. The high priest of the Sun, the young Elagabalus, was placed on the throne fallen vacant by the rebellion of the people against their Emperor. For a priest of Sun worship as Roman Emperor the first step was the making of that form of worship the religion of the nation.

"The new religion did not steal in under the modest demeanour of a stranger, claiming the common rights of hospitality as the national faith of a subject people; it entered with a public pomp as though to supersede and eclipse the ancestral deities of Rome."*

The ancient Indo-Aryan kings distinguished themselves by the performance of sacrifices and all their wealth and energy were spent in educating the people by their own example and employing capable men to propagate truth and religion, reciting the old traditions connected with the sacred places. The Epics describe these, taking their heroes on pilgrimages to these places when they were in exile. This was a subtle way of allaying the distress of the oppressed men with the accounts of the history connected with the ancient sacred places of India. This was the introduction of the poem of idolatory, the giver of light and life in the depressed heart.

The scientific truth behind the Pitrijajna and Devajajna can be traced in the shrines, which are to awaken the forgotten and unfinished

* History of Christianity. Book II, Chapter VIII, page 173.

works of their forefathers for the good of humanity. The good moral, spiritual as well as physical influences with which these shrines were connected, acted as living agents to foster their growth and development. The individual is born, not made, and his body and mind are composed of definite unit characters derived from some, but not necesearily all his ancestors, though there might be certain families in which a large proportion of able children are born from generation to generation. Parents are the natural guardians of their children, but they are not necessarily their spiritual guides. True beneficence means something more than the mere supporting of one's children with food, drink and shelter. Parents undoubtedly exert a very powerful influence upon the lives of their children and they in return deeply mourn the passing away of their parents, to which the worship of parents owes its origin.

To give thought, time and personal care were the duties attached to the great teachers of ancient India. Charity begins at home, but real charity helps men to help themselves. This was the education which ancient sages gave to their pupils in the sylvan asylums at the foot of the mountain and on the riverside. Solitude they sought for their devotion and for practising religious austerities, but they believed that faith and happiness die if they are not shared. One cannot pour the perfume of the happiness of one's soul upon others without getting a few drops on oneself. These ancient teachers received voluntary services, as depicted in the Pousya Parva, from their innocent pupils with unparalleled devotion. That was the society they liked best in their solitude, and they relied on the fact that their world had more use for cheerful idiots than a group of melancholy sages. They believed in the question of eternal life on the point of punishment for wickedness or reward for religious life on the earth below. All the religions of the world agree that the cardinal virtues of man alone can withstand the severe struggles of life, which confer on his mind and heart a sort of strength, comfort and relief so assuring and genuine as not to be realised by one sunk in carnal pleasures.

The fragments of Bharata Samhita were incorporated and lost in the two Indian Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The Mahabharata has been studied from many points of view ; linguistic, historical, geographical and grammatical, and much learning has been brought to bear upon this great subject. But unfortunately very little attempt has been made to trace the growth and development of the legends and themes which have gone to the making of the great Epic, the Mahabharata. That the fabric of the Mahabharata has been

formed out of earlier stratifications is admitted by all, but very little success has hitherto attended the efforts of scholars, either of the East or of the West, to trace the development and growth of the Mahabharata. The beginnings of the Mahabharata are lost in the accretions which have gathered thick and fast round the original neucleus of the Epic. Yet, though the task of an explorer into the dim past of Indian literature is not easy, a careful study of the Mahabharata would show that the task is not an impossible one. The clue to the original neucleus of the Mahabharata is furnished in the Annukramanika Adhyaya of Adi Parva. Anyone who has read the questions of Saunaka and the answers given to him by Sauti, will come to the conclusion that the answers of the narrator of the Mahabharata at the great sacrifice held at Neimisharanya, where great sages from different parts of India had congregated, were not to the point, where they are given in the present version of the Mahabharata; but the real answer is given in Santi Parva (Narayania Colophon). Great scholars, who have made the study of the Mahabharata their life's mission, have by overlooking these points failed to arrive at a correct conclusion as to the real origin of the great Epic.

It must be said that the learned Professor Max Muller, in his famous book "Ancient Sanskrit Literature", first pointed out the importance of the Bharata Samhita, and the work was begun by Professor Lassen, in the following manner :

"If it were possible to sift out from the huge mass of Indian Epic poetry, as we now possess it in the Mahabharata and Ramayana, those old stories and songs which must have been living for a long time in the mouth of the people before they were collected, enlarged, arranged and dressed up by later hands, a rich mine of information would be opened for the ancient times of India, and very likely also for the Vedic age. But the whole frame of the two Epic poems as they now stand, their language and metre, as well as the moral and religious system they contain, show that they were put together at a period when the world of the Veda was living by tradition only, and, moreover, partly misunderstood, and partly forgotton. The war between the Kurus and Pandavas, which forms the principal object of our Mahabharata, is unknown in the Veda The names of the Kurus and Bharatas are common in the Vedic literature, but the names of Pandavas have never been met with. It has been observed, that even in Panini's grammar the name Pandu or Pandava does not occur, while the Kurus and Bharatas are frequently mentioned, particularly in rules treating of the formation of patronymics and similar words. If, then, Asvalayana can be shown to have been a contemporary, or at least an immediate successor, of Panini, the Bharata which he is speaking of must have been very different from the Epic poem which is known to us under the name of the Mahabharata, celebrating the war of the Kurus and Pandavas.

"In the form in which we now possess the Mahabharata it shows clear traces that the poets who collected and finished it breathed an intellectual and religious atmosphere very different from that in which the heroes of the poem moved. The Epic character of the story has throughout been changed and almost obliterated by the didactic tendencies of the latest editors, who were clearly Brahmans, brought

up in the strict school of the Laws of Manu. But the original traditions of the Pandavas break through now and then, and we can clearly discern that the races among whom the five principal heroes of the Mahabharata were born and fostered, were by no means completely under the sway of the Brahmanical Law "*

Dr. Hopkins in his book "The Great Epic of India" has found that :

"Although we have but two ancient Sanskrit Epics, there is no reason to suppose that Epic poetry began with the extant poems in our possession. As was remarked above, the Mahabharata alludes to the "Great Itihasas," which may perhaps imply other poems of Epic character and considerable extent. Nor can it be supposed that Epic poetry was suddenly invented by one poet. The numerous "ancient tales" of Epic character must have furnished a large body of Epic phrase as well as fable, out of which and on the basis of which arose our present Epics." (pp. 64-65).

"Illustrative additions are occasionally added, not to add weight to the general effect, for the number of cases of actual identity is sufficiently large, but to supply material for fuller treatment of this whole subject eventually. The three hundred examples here registered include also some cases where verbal identity is not quite complete, such as

M. iv. 19, 29.

prabhinnam iva matangam parikirnam karenubhih

G. v. 14, 28,

Karenubhir Maharanye parikirno yatha dvipah

and I have not perhaps been thoroughly logical in the admission or exclusion of such cases ; but in general I have sought to establish an equation not only in the thought but in the expression of it." (p. 71).

The common tales that remain, apart from this phase of the poems, are few, and such as may be attributed easily to the general stock of legendary tradition.

"When we have peeled off the outer layer (and in it are included with one exception, if it be an exception, all the references to Valmiki in the great Epic), we have left two Epics, one of which is a complete whole, the other a congeries of incongruous stories grouped about a central tale ; both built on the same foundation of phrase and proverb and in part over the same ground of literary allusion ; both with heroes of the same type (whose similarity is striking) ; and both arranged on the same general plan, a court-scene, followed by a city-scene, where an ally is gained, and then by battle-scenes. One of these Epics claims priority, but the claim after all is not that the great poet invented Epic poetry, but that he first wrote an Epic in Sloka verse in a Kavya or artistic style. As the Ramayana is mainly in Slokas of a more refined style than the Mahabharata and the Kavya or artistic element is really much more pronounced, and as, further, it is highly probable that Epic poetry was first written in the mixture of rougher Slokas and the tristubha characteristic of the Mahabharata, this claim, so stated, may in general be allowed, without impugning the relatively greater age of the other Epic.

"Professor Jacobi admits that the metre of the Ramayana is more refined, but the explanation he gives is that it was a product of that East where poetic art was first developed. In a subsequent chapter I shall show that those parts of the great Epic which from a metrical point of view agree most closely with the Ramayana, are the later parts." (p. 79. Hopkins, "The Great Epic of India").

* Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pp. 43—46.

"Allusions to Vedic literature, Veda, Chandas, Mantra, Sruti, are naturally common in every part of the Mahabharata, but except in the didactic or later Epic these are usually of a general character. *It may be assumed that the bulk of Sruti or revealed works, if not all of it, was composed before the Epic began Nevertheless, it is interesting to see which portions of this hereditary literature are especially mentioned and particularly important to observe how the Epic cites from older works." (Hopkins p. 2).

"The Epic even has Caturveda as an epithet of a man, — 'one that knows the four Vedas' (— Caturvaidya), — as earlier triveda, traividya, is used in the same way of one learned in the three (Caturvidyam is a pseudo-epic term for the Vedas). The word triveda remains the usual form (tritayam sevitam sarvam, ix. 64, 21). Besides Caturveda as an epithet of a god (illustrated in PW.) we find in the late passage iii, 313, 1 0 ff.: pathakah pathakac cai va ye ca nye castracintakah sarve vyasanino murkha, yah kriyavan sa panditah ; caturvedo 'pi durvrttah sa cudrad atiricyat yeo 'gnihotraparo dantah sa brahmana iti smrtah. On the order of names referred to above : the lead of the Atharva is found also in the Mahabhasya (IS. xiii, p 432) ; the Epic passage is xiii, 1', 91.

"The tradition of "lost Vedas," (on this aeonic occurance (xii, 10, 16 ff.), compare vedacrutih pranasta, xii, 346, 9, the story in 348, and the quotation in the text below. The modified vrata, rules, vikriyante vedavadah, are referred to in xii, 233, 38), and "divided Vedas" is well-known. There was at first but one Veda, but after the Krta age men became men of three, men of two, men of one, and men of no Vedas, triveda, drivedu, ekaveda, anrk, iii, 149, 14-29, and v, 43, 42, castresu bhinnesu being Vedas ; bhinnas tada vedah xii, 350, 42 (by Apantaratamas). The last passage is peculiar in the use (cl. 41-47) of vedakhyane crutih karya, and in the name of Kali as krsna (as well as tisya). The former as Kali is still starred in pw. The latter is masculine in R. vi, 35, 14 (also starred as such in pw). The word occurs also in xii, 341, 83." (Hopkins pp. 2-3).

Vaicesika.

"This word is used a an adjective, of gunas, etc. in the sense of excellent ; but the system is unknown in the main Epic though it is referred to in the passage cited above, in i, 70, 43-44, and also in ii, 5, 5 (vakya) pancavayavayukta, another proof of the lateness of the Kaccit section, (The former passage, after mentioning those endowed with nyayatattvatmavijnana adds nanavakyasamaharasamavayavicaradaih, vicesakaryavidbhicca...sthapanaksepasiddhantaparamarthajnatam gataih ...karyakaranavedibhih, which may refer to either system. The passages have been cited by the author of Das Mahabharata als Epos, etc , p. 226, who admits that the five "avayas", as he calls them twice, imply the Vaicesika system), whether the five avayavas here mentioned be terms implying Nyaya or Vaicesika. Kanada's name appears first in the Harivanca (see below, p. 98, and above p. 89)

The four philosophies.

"In xii, 350, 64 ff. (compare 350, 1, pracaranti), it is said that there are four current philosophies, jnanani, the Samkhyayoga, Pancaratra, Vedaranyaka (or Vedah), and Pacupata. Kapila declared the Samkhya ; Hiranyagarbha, the Yoga ; (see the note on this verse just below. As Yoga-teacher of Daityas, Cukra is mentioned, i, 66, 43. Both Vishnu and Civa are credited with being Yogalords(loc. cit. by Holtzmann, Das Mbh. im Osten und Westen, p. 110) ; Apantaratamas is called the Teacher of the Vedas ("termed by some Pracinagarbha"), Civa declared the Pacupata religion ; Vishnu, the whole Pancaratra. "In all these philosophies Vishnu is the nistha, or chief thing." (In the Vasudeva religious philosophy of

Krishnaism, as expounded in xii. 345, 7 ff, some people, after death, became paramanubbhutas, very fine sprites, and enter Aniruddha; then as manobhutas, or mental entities, they enter Pradyumna; thence they go to Jiva (Samkarsana). Such people are "the best priests and Samkhyas and Bhagavatas." Finally, devoid of all unspiritual constituents, traigunyahina, they enter Paramatman (Ksetrajna, nirgunatmaka), or Vasudeva. These are the four forms of God. The name of God is immaterial. Rudra and Vishnu are one being, sattvam ekam, divided in two, xii, 342, 27 (they are synonyms like brhad Brahma and mahat, 337, 2, paryayavacakah cabdah; Vishnu may be called Civa, and Brahman may be called Intellect)." (Hopkins pp. 96-97).

"Kapila is authoritative in all philosophical matters and his name covers every sort of doctrine. He is in fact the only founder of a philosophical system known to the Epic. Other names of founders are either those of mere Gods or disciples of Kapila. Badarayana and Patanjali [in the Sarvadarcanasamgraha it is said that Patanjali made (atha yoganucasanam, i. 1) an anucasana, or secondary collection (as anu is explained) based on earlier Puranic materials. The verse attributed in this connection to the Yajnavalkya Smrti (158, 17; p. 239 of Cowell's translation) has caused the Petersburg Lexicon to postulate, s v., another Smrti of the same name. I think it is a mere lapsus for Vyasa's Smrti, for the verse cited ("Hiranyagarbha, and no other ancient, is the declarer of Yoga") occurs xii, 350, 65. It has occurred to me that this verse might imply Patanjali, and the "no other" be a distinct refutation of his claim, the Epic preferring divine authority; but this is perhaps too pregnant] are unknown even as names, and Jaimini and Gautama appear only as sages, not as leaders of speculation. Candilya (otherwise said to be known in the Epic) is respectfully cited on Yoga, not as founder but as recomending Yoga concentration. (prthagbhutesu srstesu caturthacramakarmasu samadhau yogam evai'tac (maduktam vakyam) chandilyah camam abravit xii, 254, 14). As a teacher of unconditioned Brahman, Atreya is lauded in xiii, 137, 3; and in xii, 319, 59, a list of teachers of the twenty-fifth (spiritual) principle is given as having instructed the Gandharva Vicvavasu: Jaigisavya, Asita Devala, Paracara, Varsaganya, Bhrgu, Pancacikha, Kapila, Cuka, Gautama, Arstisena, Garga, Narada, Asuri, Pulastya, Sanatkumara, Cukra, Kacyapa, seventeen mixed gods, saints, and philosophers, of whom two are important besides Kapila, namely Asuri and Pancacikha, his pupils; while one system (explained below) is referred also to Asita Devala.

"There seems to be no reason to doubt that Kapila was a real (human) philosopher, and not a mere shadow of a divinity. The fact that his name is also given to divinities proves the oypposite as little as does his deification, for it is customary to deify sages and for divinities to have sages' names." (Hopkins pp. 97-98).

"Narada" knew the difference between Samkhya and Yoga," ii, 5, 7. Caunaka is "rapt with metaphysics, adhyatma, skilled in Yoga and in Samkhya," iii, 2, 15." (Hopkins p. 100).

"There is no fixed Epic text because Hindu Epic poetry was never fixed. All Epic poems were transmitted at first orally, and the various re-writers treated them exactly as the rhapsodists had previously done, altered and added as they pleased. Reconstruction of the original text is therefore out of the question. All that can be done is to exercise the most palpable interpolations in each traditional rendering.

"Neither of the Epics, as such, is recognized before the late period of the Grhyasutras, and the first Epic recognized here and in other Sutras is the Bharata. The question has often been raised, which Epic is the older? In our present state of knowledge it may be said that this question cannot now, and probably never can be answered in one word. In the [illegible] always be idle to speak of either

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Epic as the older without specifying whether one means the present text; for that these, in the case of either Epic, are convertible terms is an idea refuted by even a superficial acquaintance with the poems. Assuming, however, that the question implies priority of Epic qua Epic as a new genus of literature, and whether this form first arose as Ramayana or (Maha) Bharata, this too cannot be answered categorically be ause parts of the latter are older than the former and the former is older than the mass of the latter, as will be shown. Personally, I have no doubt that the Pandu (Pandava) form of the great Epic is later than the Rama Epic; but, since one was a slow outgrowth from a Punjab Kuru Epic, and the other, of unknown antecedents, was developed far to the East, in much more polished form, while only the Bharata is recognised in Vedic literature, I have as little doubt that there was a Bharata Epic before there was a Ramayana;" (Hopkins pp. 60-51).

It is thus quite clear that the Bharata Samhita which embodied the different thought strata of the Aryans up to the time of its compilation incorporated them into the texts of the Mahabharata. They form parts of the Bharata Samhita and as such a short summary of its original kernel is given in the very first section of the Mahabharata in its present form. They are out of context in their present position in the texts and can only be understood if they are taken with the portions which are treated in the subsequent portions of the Mahabharata.

The Bharata Samhita had been edited and revised aud eventually incorporatated in the Mahabharata. There seems to be no doubt that in its original form the Bharata Samhita was a very ancient work. Having had its origin in the Rig Vedic sacrificial schools, it preserves not only an intimate connection with the Vedas but also marks a practical advance on their philosophy. It is for this that it has received so much attention and study from the orthodox Brahmins, who have lost sight of important facts relating to the growth and development of the Mahabharata legends.

It is now necessary to find out what constituted the Bharata Samhita, which was based on the school of Narada. The Samkhya system lays stress on dualism, and therefore the Bhakti cult, which centres round the worship of Narayana, has its origin in that school. This has been clearly brought out in the Srimad Bhagvata Purana, in which Kapila propounds the theistic principles of his system to his mother.* What is said in the Mahabharata is clearly borne out by the Srimad Bhagavata Purana. For this the early evidence is all the more important. It is evident from the fact that the unique contribution of Kapila or his school has been to combine knowledge with virtuous life through means of Ekanta (faith). It has been already shown that the philosophy of Kapila had a tendency to break up old society, for according to the evidence of the Mahabharata, he preached against the performance of sacrifices as leading to salva-

* Skandha 3, Chapter 29.

tion. He advocated renunciation through knowledge as the chief means of salvation. The cult of Bhakti, which grew up in the school of Narada, was then strengthened by the Samkhya system of philosophy.

The other five well-known Schools of Indian Philosophy were evolved out of the system of Samkhya Philosophy first enunciated by Narada and then developed by Kapila Gautama, who is mentioned as the pupil of Ayodhadhaumya in the Paushya Parva and a sage in whose family Nyaya Philosophy was developed. Vyasa was a student of the Nyaya School, but he founded a new school and therefore fell out with his preceptor. The fanciful popular story to explain the name of Akshipada Gautama only proves that Veda-Vyasa was posterior to Gautama and also Kapila. His thesis was the latest development of the Vedic schools, which began to discourse on metaphysics. The school of Vedanta was the final phase of Vedic literature. Veda-Vyasa is said to have been a pupil of Gautama, the author of logic, whom he is said to have offended by his Brahma Sutra. The result was the origin of the Mahabharata and the Bharata Samhita was merged in it in such a way as to make it hard to trace it.

If the whole mass of evidence is collected from the Mahabharata there will remain no shadow of doubt that the genesis of the metaphysical speculation centred on the performance of sacrifices sanctioned by the Rig-Veda. The great sage Vasishtha and the king Visvamitra quarrelled over the point whether animals should be sacrificed at the Yajnas or not, Vasishtha being of opinion that they should not be, Visvamitra maintaining the contrary opinion. Beginning with the Yajnas of Puroraba, Nahusa and Yayati, who had performed animal sacrifices, but could not obtain permanence in heaven for their moral lapses, one comes to the story of the king Uparichara, who had at first taken the side of the Gods against the Brahmins and had given his opinion in favour of animal sacrifice, for which the Brahmins cursed him and hurled him down from heaven. Eventually he was saved by the great God Narayana, whose devotee he became, and this legend marks the end of the Bharata Samhita and the beginning of the Mahabharata. That the present interesting Epic portion of the Mahabharata had no place in its earlier text is borne out in the Annukramanika chapter.

The exposition of the Narayana cult formed the most important theme of the Bharata Samhita. The Bharata Samhita, connected with the sacrificial schools of the Rig-Veda, contains valu-

able information about the distinctly historical personages and the mythopaeia of the Rig-Veda. The school of Kapila arose out of a dispute regarding the performance of a Yajna in which a cow was going to be slaughtered. In its very nature it was a protestant movement, and with regard to its aim and scope it was as revolutionary as it could be if one takes into account the social and religious conditions of the time. Its religion has been characterised as Aikantika (a religion of faith) produced by true knowledge. The school of Kapila has outstanding theories with regard to Devajajna and Pitrijajna which have been briefly treated before.

Now the school of Kapila was assailed by Veda-Vyasa. The Bharata Samhita had become very popular by the time of the advent of Veda-Vyasa, the author of the Brahma Sutra. It was the first time in the history of Indian culture that a popular hand-book was composed in a philosophical school which presented a course of spiritual and moral education for the people in general. The sage Vyasa undertook to re-write it, if not to obliterate it, to suit his philosophical doctrines. He subsequently found out that the Narada version (the Bharata Samhita) was more popular than his own and accordingly he remodelled his first thesis, the Mahabharata, with its sequel, in Harivamsa and finally in Srimad Bhagavata. Portions of the Bharata Samhita were removed from their proper context and many relevant portions were altogether omitted and used in a different manner in the Mahabharata, Harivamsa and Srimad Bhagavata. But it should also be remembered that the cult of Bhakti (Devotion) was based on Narada's system, and some of the portions which were subsequently expunged from the Mahabharata were perhaps preserved almost in their original form in the Srimad Bhagavata Purana and in the Ramayana. The Aila-Gita, the story of Devabhuti and Kapila, were the more prominent themes told in the Bharata Samhita, which were expunged from the current edition of the Mahabharata but found their place in Srimad Bhagavata Purana. The story of the Ramayana had its origin in a legend of the Bharata Samhita, and came to be separately and elaborately treated in the heroic poem of Valmiki.

The University of Saunaka was responsible for the production of many Puranas, etc. It is not improbable that the relevant parts of the Bharata Samhita were placed within the Puranas to constitute their essential parts, and it is for this that the majority of the Puranas contain Souti's and Sounaka's discourses and Epic

subjects were briefly referred to. The school of Vedanta, which is propounded by Veda-Vyasa, is the last phase of Vedic literature. The Bharata Samhita, which is based upon the Narada Samkhya School of Philosophy, reached its final form in the school of Veda-Vyasa, the author of the Brahma Sutra, in the Mahabharata. They mark two great epochs in Indian History and almost complete the ancient cultural cycle, with its thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. Both the systems of philosophy abide in the heart and in the practices of the people of India, and this accounts for the phenomenal popularity of the Bharata Samhita.

The cycle of Svayumbhuva Manu, in which Kapila propounded his philosophy, had already attained its culminating point. Society, politics and economics had passed through many stages of evolution, and the simple beliefs of an older and more primitive age, as represented by the dogmas of the priests, could hardly satisfy the yearning questions. The improved moral standards of the people were the outcome of the amelioration of their economic condition. The caste system had not yet been evolved in water-tight compartments and it required definitions and differentiations which had to be completed in order to avoid the inevitable clash or a movement towards obliteration of all their cherished distinctions, as was later on sought to be brought about by Buddhism. As the Bharata Samhita represented the synthesis of Aryan culture and civilisation, it became the manual of the people *par excellence.*

Now the solution of the complicated problems of society which was undertaken by the Bharata Samhita was very clearly illustrated in the dialogues between Yudhisthira and Bhisma. Yudhisthira enquired of Bhisma if the rulings of the scriptures prescribing penances for any breach or deviation in the performance of any sacrificial rites or from any path of conduct, could be regarded as binding on all occasions and for all persons. He pointed out the contradictions involved in the injunctions of the scriptures and also the changeability of the Vedic practices from age to age. What was Dharma for one class of persons was not Dharma for another. The great sages, like Agastya, were said to have accumulated merit by taking part in the sacrifices in which animals were slaughtered. Now these contradictions in the practices of good men and bad men, and the dogmatic assertions of both as to the respective religious merits of the conduct followed by them, required clear explanation. Bhisma answered him by citing the discourse between Tuladhara and Jajli, who on account of his austere

penances had become very proud and whom a revelation from above had directed to see Tuladhara, a merchant in Benares, and to learn from him the real Dharma. The student of history may notice some points of similarity between the instructions of Tuladhara to Brahmin Jajali and those of Buddha. The substance of the instructions of Tuladhara was as follows :—

Cruelty to animals must be abandoned or if that be not possible it must be minimised as far as possible. Friendship with all must be practised. He must have faith in an imminent personal God and must regard the living world as the manifestation of this divinity. He must be indifferent to praise or criticism and must be detached from the pursuit of worldly pleasure. Loss of dear ones should not affect him as they meet accidentally in the world as two wooden pieces are brought together in the current for a short time to be separated from each other for ever. He must give up sorrow. The person giving to other persons or animals protection from fear receives the same reward as one would if he had performed all the sacrifices. He then pointed out the distinction between the crude religion which centred round the sacrifices and the more refined religion which had its origin in the desire for the attainment of the Brahma.

In one essential point there is a striking difference between Buddhism and the religion of the Bharata Samhita, the ethical code of both being non-sectarian and anti-sacrificial. It is the earnest faith in the godhead which is the most important feature of the Bharata Samhita and distinguishes it from the agnostic (non-theistic) code of morality propounded by Buddha.

The Narayana cult is the most prominent and outstanding feature of the Bharata Samhita, which is clearly an authoritative exposition of the cult of Narayana worship. The Bharata Samhita is also regarded as embodying the Vedic religion. Now in the Vedic hymns Narayana as the supreme God is conspicuously absent. A Rishi by the name of Narayana was the author of the Purusha Sukta of 10th Mandala of Rig-Veda. The sage Narayana propounded the organic theory of society and this theory became later on the sheet anchor of Brahmanism, which seized upon this verse in its literal sense and utilised it to the fullest extent for asserting their superior position in the social order of the Aryans.

The word "Narayana" had etymological possibilities which the Brahmins fully exploited. It is a compound of two words, *viz.*, Nara and Ayana, which mean water and path, respectively. The word therefore means the great God who leads men across the river of life and death. How Narayana came to be identified with Vishnu, a minor Vedic God, is just as much a historical riddle as how Siva became identical with Rudra of the Vedic hymns.

The unique position which the Bharata Samhita occupies in Indian religion and literature is largely due to the solutions it offered to many vexed questions of the time. The worship of Narayana and Siva,

which was introduced among the Aryans by linking them up with the Vedic deities Vishnu and Rudra, may be regarded as a triumph of the Aryan mind, which accomplished harmonious relations between the conquering immigrants and the aborigines of the land, whose religion and worship they at first abhorred. The Vedic pantheon of deities consisting of Indra, Varuna, Agni, etc., was too closely identified with the conquering people and hence could not be acceptable to the Non-Aryans, who because of their superior numbers had got to be admitted into the fold of the Aryan religion and to be dominated culturally. And thus the worship of Narayana was introduced.

This was done by a process of sublimation. The psychology of the common people, who could more easily understand description than speculation, was taken into account when the new cult was propounded. There is a complete and satisfactory evidence of the Pre-Buddnistic origin of the Narayana cult in the following hymn of the Taittereya Aranyaka.

नारायण परो ज्योतिरात्मा नारायण परः ।
नारायण परं ब्रह्मतत्त्वं नारायण परः ॥
नारायण परोध्याता ध्यान नारायण परः ।

Taittereya Aranyaka is closely connected with the Vedic Saerificial Schools and hence the quesion arises why and how Narayana worship was introduced. It is conclusively proved by this quotation that Narayana worship made its appearance in the Sacrificial Vedic Schools, not as one of the many deities who were invoked and propitiated at the sacrifices but as the principal God, who is described as the supreme contemplator, nay, He is conceived even as contemplation itself. He is here hinted as superior to Brahma, for He is "Brahma Tattvah" Himself, *i.e.*, embodiment of Brahma knowledge. Now these attributes stated in the usual philosophic form of the Upanishads is very interesting as bearing upon the popular conception of Narayana. Narayana is the supreme God who, immersed in meditation, reposes on the hood of the Snake God Vasuki in the midst of universal water. This popular notion, which is described in the Mahabharata as well as in many of the Puranas, furnishes us with the clue to the introduction of the cult of Narayana. The well-known book Chandi, containing as it does the odes to Goddess Durga, is revered all over India. It contains an ode in the eleventh chapter worshipping the goddess as Narayain—a point of some interest.

From the Mahabharata, we learn that Vasuki was the Snake God. His sister was married to Jarat-Karu and the great sage Astika was the offspring of this marriage. It was he who stopped the snake sacrifice of Janmejoya I. This story probably contains a great historical truth. From the time of Parikshit I, down to the time of Janmejoya I, there

was a great conflict between the Nagas and the Kshatriyas, who were certainly helped by a few of the Brahmanic class, but the Nagas allied themselves with other influential Brahmanical families and through their intercession, the war between the Vedic Aryans and the Nagas stopped. The fact that Narayana, the new chief God of the Brahmins, rested on the hood of the Snake-God marked a happy reconciliation between the two warring races. Intermarriages between Brahmins and Kshatriyas on the one hand and the Nagas on the other are frequently mentioned in the Mahabharata, and it is quite clear that Nagas very soon became culturally incorporated with the Aryans.

In the Mahabharata one comes across the views of different sages and thinkers of ancient India on practical life, along with a short exposition of the philosophy on which the practical code of life enunciated by them is based. This enables one to form a correct estimate of the problems which confronted them, and the solutions which they offered give one an insight into their personal predilections. No student of history can disregard the mass of information which is collected in the different discourses throughout Vana Parva, Udyoga Parva, Santi Parva and Anusashana Parva of the Mahaharata.

The questions which occurred to each of the sages and thinkers whose views were propounded in the said discourses relate to the right conduct of men in the four stages of life. Unless sacrifices were the all important social phenomena of the time, they would not have been given the prominence which they have in the Mahabharata. Coupled with this were the six daily observances binding upon every twice-born teacher and pupil in Aryan culture in India. Kapila, to a great extent, ignored them and pointed out the way of salvation by renunciation through knowledge. Kapila is the recognised author of the Samkhya system of philosophy. It has been shown already that the doctrines of Kapila were highly revolutionary in a society which was based upon a carefully prepared routine of public and private life in its four stages. Whether Kapila was actually connected with the Narayana cult as its originator is a matter of speculation. In the Bharata Samhita, in the Go-Kapiliya discourse, he is said to be a believer in Narayana. Though one may be inclined to be sceptical about the theistic aspect of the school of Kapila, yet one may not reject the evidence of the Mahabharata in this matter. The Samkhya system contains only the bare fragments of his metaphysical doctrines, and though they are assigned to Kapila, their actual composition was of such a later date than when they were formulated, that the evidence of the Mahabharata cannot be ignored on this point, for Kapila, the author of Akalika Pralaya, is associated in the tradition of the race with the cult of Narayana worship.

Veda-Vyasa, who propounded the Brahma Sutra, struck the chord of compromise when he clearly advocated the cause of sacrifice. The extreme school dogmatically asserted the spiritual value of animal sacrifices. They maintained that the offerer of sacrifices would ascend to heaven after death as a reward for having performed them in this world. Some of them, in fact, said that those who had performed them in the past very successfully had been bodily transported to heaven and had replaced even the great Indra in the rulership of heaven. Now these irrational views were rejected by Vyasa as they had been scornfully repudiated by Kapila. The great author of Brahma Sutra was not only a great philosopher, who lived in a world of metaphysical speculations, but one who was deeply connected with the solution of social problems as they presented themselves to him. In his Brahma Sutra he dwelt on the true relations between Atman and Paramatman, and offered a synthesis between the individualistic school of Samkhya and the pantheistic teachings of the Upanishads; but what is important to the student of Indian history is the deep insight which he showed into the social requirements of the time. He resuscitated sacrifices from the obloquy to which they had been subjected since the time of Kapila. This is what he says about the practices discarded by Kapila.

"Gifts, study of the Vedas, sacrifices, penances, modesty, guilelessness and self-control, these increase one's energy and dissipate one's sins "*

"He should adore the fire and Brahmanas and bow to the Gods. He should avoid all sorts of inauspicious talk, and all acts of unrighteous injury."†

"The body with individual soul within it is an excellent car. When sacrifices and religious rights are made its Upastha (seat), shame its Varutha, Upaya and Apaya its kuvara, the vital air called Prana its Yoga, knowledge and the span of existence its points for tying the horses, carefulness its beautiful Vandhura, the assumption of good conduct its nemi, vision, touch, scent and hearing its four horses, wisdom its nabhi, all the scriptures its paratoda, certain knowledge of the scriptural sayings its driver, the Soul its firmly seated rider, faith and self-control its fore-runners, renunciation its inseparable companion following behind and bent upon doing it good, purity the path along which it goes, meditation its goal, then may that car reach Brahma and shine there effulgently."‡

Thus Veda Vyasa is disclosed in his complete personality, and one can assign to him, by means of this, his true place in the evolution of Indian culture, which does not consist of speculations divorced from realities of life but of thoughts helpful to the reformation of society.

The radical and revolutionary doctrines of Kapila probably tended to disintegrate the Aryan social order. And one must not forget that the Aryan culture, which was represented by Aryan domination, could only be maintained in its politico-economic aspect by a rigid adherence to the social order, evolved out of the conflict between the Aryans and the Non-

*Shanti Parva, Chapter CCXXXV, page 356, Sloka 6. † Sloka 8.
‡Shanti Parva, Chapter CCXXXVI, page 358, Slokas 8—11.

Aryans. If the doctrines of Kapila spread, as they were likely to in view of their intense rationalism, the whole Aryan society would be engulfed in a racial cataclysm. It became necessary to give the Vedic practices a new interpretation and a new outlook, and this was done by Veda Vyasa. The Mahabharata, because it was a popular book, supplements our information about its author with the part played by him in the historical development of ancient Aryan society.

In the Brahma Sutra, Veda-Vyasa regarded Brahma as the supreme being; in the Bharata Samhita Narayana is called the supreme being. It is said that Narada, the divine minstrel, learnt it from the great sage Narayana himself, as well as from Sanat Kumara. He transmitted the knowledge of this to Veda-Vyasa, and from Veda-Vyasa downwards. Bhisma received enlightenment on this subject from his father Santanu. It was learned by Yudhisthira from Bhisma as well as from Veda-Vyasa. Now one must confess that he is presented with a riddle in the history of the origin and spread of the Narayana cult as it occurs in the Narayana section of the Santi Parva. In the evolution of Indian history one is presented with merely accomplished facts. All the traces of normal historical evolutions which are the outcome of social conditions are very often obliterated. It has been mentioned already that Kapila and Veda-Vyasa were both connected with the cult of Narayana worship. It would not be a far-fetched conclusion on one's part, if from these facts as supplied by the great Epic, it is held that the philosophical doctrines which were propounded by the Indian sages were written in the usual Sutra style and the vocabulary was developed in the Vedic Philosophical Schools, but in the popular discourses of the Mahabharata these same sages expressed their thoughts in a manner which was more intelligible to the common people. The God Narayana by the time of the Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata had replaced the Vedic Gods, etc., from the worship of the people.

Veda-Vyasa of the Narayana portion of the Mahabharata is the son of the sage Narayana and he is clearly mentioned in Harivamsa, the sequel of the Mahabharata, as Apantaratama, which name also occurs in the Narayana section of Santi Parva. The title "Vyasa" is assumed even now by a person who explains the Puranas to the audience. The various editors of the Mahabharata were known by this name, but the speaker who read Bharata Samhita, was a disciple of Narada and was no other than Apantaratama. He must be distinguished from Veda-Vyasa, who was the son of Parasara and who is perhaps not the author of the Brahma Sutra. The author of Brahma Sutra is Apantaratama, the son of the sage Narayana. The original Bharata Samhita lies scattered in different portions of the Mahabharata, but the main didactic portion is

preserved in Santi Parva in the discourses between Vyasa and Shuka, Bhisma and Yudhisthira. It must be observed that the son of Parasara was born not as a result of incontinence on the part of his father, but through the boon of God Siva.

The Narayana cult, which was evolved out of racial conflicts, was used for the solution of a great question that was agitating the minds of the Aryan immigrants. It was only in the Mahabharata, in which the very important is mixed up with the trivial, that some of the most important stages of the development of Aryan thought can be traced with some measure of certainty. The field covered by the Epic is so vast, and the problems which came up for solution at the hands of the great sages and thinkers so baffling, that it is quite natural that one should feel a sense of bewilderment at the complicated task of allocating the different thought strata to define historical periods about which our knowledge is deplorably inadequate. The historians who had the materials of the Epics had all shirked the task and dismissed the accounts thereof as legendary, though many of the kings and sages of the Mahabharata were Vedic personalities who figured either as the composers of the Rik hymns or as kings whose benefactions to the priests elicited their warm admiration and gratitude.

From the earliest times connected with Aryan immigration, there were two religious schools whose differences in their outlook on life resulted in the evolution of two cultural groups in this country. These relate to Devajajna and Pitrijajna, which mean the path of God worship and that of ancestor worship, respectively. That ancestor worship was a very early Indo-Germanic institution is well-known to all students of history. The God worship which sprang up in India was connected with the adoration of the natural phenomena, later on represented as the seats of different divinities. In other Indo-Germanic countries there was a working harmony between the two different forms of worship, but the specialisation which is a specially remarkable feature of the Aryans in India led to a dispute between the cults of ancestor worship and God-worship. The dispute must have reached an acute stage. Those who worshipped the Gods formed themselves into a group under the name of Solar dynasty (Surya Vamsa) and those who advocated ancestor worship finally depicted themselves as belonging to the Lunar dynasty (Chandra Vamsa). The Epic and the Puranas say* that both of them were sprung from the same ancestor. Now this view is accepted by Pargiter in his dynastic lists. The testimony of Aitereya-lochanam, which quotes Satapatha Brahmana, is invaluable. †

*Aitereya Brahmana, p. 91. †Cf. Aitareya Brahmana, Vol. IV. Aitereya-lochanam, p. 91, Asiatic Society of Bengal Edition.

Here one has three paths for three groups. To those who worship the Gods, the Sun is said to be their glory (ज्योति). To those who make offerings to their deceased ancestors, the Moon holds the same place as the Sun does to the divinity worshipper; and a third is added for the common people, namely fire. It appears that the Kshatriyas and the Brahmins had split up into two categories of God- and ancestor-worshippers, with the common people still clinging to the worship of fire.

Now it is evident from the above that through the cult of Narayana worship a spritual harmony was brought about between, at first, the two cultural groups which existed in India. It is, from that point of view, not a mere coincidence that the Bharata Samhita and the Ramayana have the worship of Narayana as their central theme. The Bharata Samhita celebrated the deeds of the Lunar dynasty, *i.e.*, those who were ancestor-worshippers, whereas Rama is the greatest hero of the Solar dynasty. As Devajajna degenerated in later times into the worship of evil spirits also, the Ramayana is connected with the popular theology of the Atharva-Veda and is used as an incantation for exorcising evil spirits even to-day. The tradition that the Lunar dynasty was connected with ancestor-worship is still strongly clung to by the people, as evidenced by the recital of portions of the Mahabharata at funeral ceremonies.

The Narayana cult, however, was developed on the same philosophical line as the Brahma Vidya, which was connected purely with the school of Devajajna. In fact, in His attributes Narayana was made more embracing than the supreme God Brahma. He, as Vishnu, takes his share of offerings at the sacrifices in an invisible form, and He is only visible to those who are His great devotees—such as Vasistha, the King Uparichara, Narada, etc. If Brahma is regarded as the creator of the world, it is Narayana who upholds the creation through contemplation of the active principles of life. He punishes moral transgressions and rewards virtue. The other Gods, through the development of mythological phantasy among the people, were shown to have been guilty of acts which, in the period of more developed moral consciousness, were regarded as henious crimes. Narayana is the irreproachable Supreme Being (Mahapurusha) who is above every being found among mortals as well as gods. The ancestor-worshippers were told that the oblations and libations which they offered to their ancestors reached Him and none else*. Thus the cult of Narayana, which appeared as a sequel to the Vedic cult of ancestor worship and god worship, not only came as a solution of the racial strife between the Nagas and the

* Shanti Parva, Chapter 346.

Aryans, but also healed up a sore within the body politic of the latter, who had diverged in two different directions.

The Bharata Samhita was not confined merely to the upper classes to the exclusion of the common people. It is generally conceded that the Aryans conquered the Non-Aryans. Of these the snake worshippers were quite powerful and had attained a high degree of civilisation. The Brahmins and the Kshatriyas had no hesitation, after a period of conflict with them, in terminating it by a cultural and racial fusion and it is quite clear that in the form in which Narayana worship was instituted the distinctive contribution of the Nagas might be traced. The Aryan policy was imposed upon other people less civilised than the Nagas. The Nishadas, who lived by hunting, the Kiratas, wood dwellers, the Rakshasas, the powerful people who were gradually driven to the south where they still remained powerful, must have outnumbered the Aryans, who though strong in arms must have looked upon the numerical superiority of the conquered people with no friendly eye in the beginning. They were gradually brought within the pale of Aryan civilisation and admitted within the caste system.

In the sacrifices, they were addressed by the Brahmanic priests on different days. The Aryan conquerors very soon realised that domination could only be permanently ensured if these people were culturally admitted into the fold of the Aryans.. The Epics teem with examples of intermarriage between the conquered and the conqueror, but that was hardly found to effect the relative position of the several races dwelling together in India. The Aryan mind, which is represented in Vedic literature, is peculiarly philosophical and therefore synthetic. The multitude of gods and goddesses in the Hindu Pantheon was introduced in its elastic orbit by a desire on the part of the conquerors to accommodate the conquered people in a cultural plane in which religious beliefs played a very important part. There is evidence throughout the Epics and the Puranas that the great God Mahadeva was worshipped by Nishadas, Kiratas and Rakshasas. In fact, in the social and political conditions of India which obtained in the very early times, violence was the order of the day, and the great God was worshipped by the warriors at the time of war. The god one worships, reflects one's moral nature at its best. The Non-Aryans, though powerful in war, had not reached the cultural heights of the Aryans. The conception of Siva (Mahadeva) in popular imagination was connected with all that was grotesque and malevolent. He is represented as being covered with ashes. He revels in intoxicating drugs. His associates are ghosts and ugly attendants. He is naked and dances wild dances at times of battle. The Non-Aryan Barbarians worshipped

Him in the form of Phallus, which symbolises the principles of procreation.

Now it required a good deal of imagination on the part of the Aryan sages to sublimate this gruesome conception into the philosophic height represented by the mythology which clusters round the popular God Mahadeva. He has been connected with the Vedic worship of fire, which lingered latest in the practices of the common people, as has been shown by the quotation from Satapatha Brahmana, Siva being another name for Fire in the form of Rudra. He has two aspects—the one is the reflection of his terrible aspect and the other is beneficent, which is the outcome of his association with Uma, his consort, who is the embodiment of all womanly virtues. In these dual aspects they are supposed to represent the totality of men and women who bear as a mark of their origin from the two great deities, their chief physical signs. In the fourteenth chapter of Anushasana Parva, the attributes of Mahadeva are described. They coincide with all the great individualistic diversities which constitute the totality of the human race.

The fact that the worship of Mahadeva was recognised and introduced among the higher classes shows not only a design, but also the growing influence of popular religion upon the intellectual classes. The worship of Narayana stands on a different footing, however. It is the starting point of a new era of political and cultural development and is associated in the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata Purana with the great sages Kapila and Narada, and Narayana is represented as a being even above Siva. In the Mahabharata, which is philosophically very advanced, these words occur, "Men worship Siva, the destroyer, because they fear him."

The origin of the Hindu Trinity is a very interesting study. In the Rig-Veda the conception of the unity of godhead is seldom met with. The word "Brahma" originally meant "Praise". It was also used to mean "Sacrifice" and greatness. The word Brahmanaspati and Brihaspati connote the Lord of Prayer. In a later phase of the development of Aryan thought, one marks a new meaning being put to the word "Brahma". He is said to be the supreme being, the Creator of the Universe. He is metaphysically studied in the schools of the Upanishads and other branches of Vedic literature, but the cult of Narayana could be traced also to a very early period. It is connected with the school of Kapila, who is said to have further founded the system of Samkhya. The Narayana cult can claim a spiritual affinity with the Samkhya system in its pronounced dualism, as distinguished from the monism of the Upanishads.

Laymen ascribe creation to the principles of procreation. The Upanishadic view that all living beings are sprung from bliss and merge

in bliss was too metaphysical for them to understand. Hence the sages recognised the worship of Mahadeva in its popular Non-Aryan form of Phallus. In the Rig Veda the Non-Aryans have been characterised as worshippers of Phallus. It is at a later time in the history of cultural development that the cult of Siva worship originated. It did not discard popular notions, but improved upon them by giving them a higher spiritual and metaphysical significance.

The Bharata Samhita is explanatory of the Vedas, and it must not be forgotten that it was done by amplification. The Bharata Samhita was meant to be read by philosophers as well as by ordinary men to whom the Vedas were not intelligible. The Vedic ideas and the constant tendency in them to explain natural phenomena and the ordinary occurrences by means of a higher law governing them led to much abstraction and symbolism. The symbolism which one finds in the Vedas, where it is generally understood as such, gave rise to myths, by which abstract ideas could be easily explained to the people.

These myths were very frequently used in the earlier portions of the Bharata Samhita. The philosophical speculations which lie at the root of these myths were explained in later portions of the book. That they were inter-related and could not be separated from one another will be shown at a subsequent place. It is incumbent here to point out the fact that the word Vyasa Kuta—riddle of Vyasa, the compiler of the Mahabharata,—refers to this; to the apparent irrelevance of earlier topics which are disconnected with one another, unless they are explained by reference to their amplifications in the subsequent portions of the Mahabharata.

The cult of Mahadeva having had its origin in popular beliefs, marks a new development of Aryan thought. Chronologically its admission in the fold of Aryan culture may be regarded as somewhat later than the introduction of the Narayana cult. But there is no reason to doubt that at the time of the compilation of the Bharata Samhita, which may be assigned to the age of Svyumbhuva Manu, the Pasupata (Mahadeva or Siva) cult was already in existence. The Vedic origin of the three of the new chief divinities was now established, Brahma the supreme being is directly derived from the Vedic vocabulary, though its Vedic connotation was completely altered, Narayana is connected with Vishnu, and Mahadeva with Rudra, minor Vedic divinities.

Aryan mythology kept pace with this new form of worship. The three chief gods, Brahma, Vishnu or Narayana and Siva or Mahadeva, were explained with regard to their respective attributes by means of stories, which are all to be found in the Mahabharata. In India anyone

who wants to effect any synthesis tries to do so through the means of religion. The attempt of the great Emperor Akbar in this direction is noteworthy, because he tried to effect a cultural fusion between the Hindus and the Mahommedans by means of a new religion, and in this he was quite in line with the traditional habits of the Hindus. This explains why, in this country, there are so many religions which though they originated with the idea of effecting synthesis succeeded in intensifying diversity, because in India it is as easy to set up a new religion as it is difficult for it to replace an older popular belief.

The University of Ayodhadaummya, which has been referred to already, produced pupils who played an important part in the great cultural ferment which agitated the minds of the people of that time. It has been shown that the Solar and Lunar dynasties, which represented two distinct lines of kings, had two forms of worship, Pitrijajna and Devajajna. Upamanyu, who was a disciple of Ayodhadaummya, was connected with the introduction of the Mahadeva cult. He got it from the school of Tandi, another sage and devotee of Siva. It must be remembered, and it is a matter of great interest to students of Indian history, that Upamanyu was a composer of Vedic hymns. One should not discard the evidence of the Mahabharata in this respect, for the Mahabharata was expressly undertaken not only to explain the Vedas, but also to supplement one's information about the Vedic sages. In the discourse between Vasudeva and Yudhisthira, where the former cites the name of sage Upamanyu as having explained to him the cult of Mahadeva, one comes across all the legends and metaphysics connected with this new school. Though some of these are interpolations, the esoteric significance of the Paulama, Paushya and Astika Parvas is fully amplified in the Annusashana Parva in the discourse cited above.

The genealogy of the line of Bhrigu and certain incidents connected with the abduction of his alleged wife Paulama may be traced to a very early story in the Rig Veda (Mandala I, Sukta 60) and these are again treated in the Vana Parva in a much more trustworthy and reliable manner than is found described in the Paulama Parva. Bhrigu's connection with the Bharata Samhita may be clearly found in Santi Parva, Vritra Gita, Chapter 278, 279 onward.

It is interesting to quote here the views of an European scholar, Kasten Ronnow, in his article " Visvarupa " in the " Indian Studies" presented to the Sanskrit Professor Edward James Rapson, in the University of Cambridge:—

"As far as I can see—and I shall give some reasons for my opinion presently—Visvarupa was originally a serpent deity closely connected with a "pre-vedic"

sacrifice. The nature of this connection seems to have been that the cult of which he was himself the centre became absorbed by the Asura cult; and thus he became an authority upon sacrifice, a sort of purohita of the Gods. However, though a son of Tvastar—with whom he may even previously have had some connection—and a servant of the Vedic gods, he was still a suspect as being an object of Indra's enmity. The whole ended in a catastrophe; and the books of ritual not incorrectly explained his fate by telling that he carried on an intrigue with the Asuras, the old foes of the Devas.

"No doubt Tvastar was originally a deity of agricultural tribes, to whom was attributed the important function of superintending the creative activities of the herds. The expression pasunam mithunanam rupakrt I would consequently translate by 'Creator of the embryos of animal couples' or--if mithuna were a synonym of maithuna—'creator of the embryos at the pairings of animals.' Because Tvastar's rupa's denoted above all the embryos of cattle, the word rupa also came to mean simply 'cattle, domestic animal'. This is the case in SBr., ii, 2, 3, 2 (cf. TS, i, 5, 1). We are told here that the Gods once (the TS. says at a battle with the Asuras) deposited their valuables (TS. has vamam vasu.) with Agni. And these precious things consisted in sarvani rupani yani ca gramyani yani caranyani. Eggeling translates this by 'all forms, both domestic and wild'; it is, however, more correct to render it by 'all their cattle, domesticated as well as undomesticated' Agni, however, disappeared together with all these rupa's Thanks to the circumstance that Tvastar beheld the punaradheya, he succeeded in finding Agni, who handed them over to him: tasmad ahus tvastrani vai rupaniti tvastur hy eva sarvam rupam upa ha tvevanyah praja yavat so yayat sa iva tisthante.

"Having thus tried to ascertain the true nature of the rupa's of Tvastar, we shall proceed to explain why his son, the demon Visvarupa was known just by that name. This name, robbed of its cosmogonic majesty, exactly fits a God of the herds such as was originally Tvastar. It is also to be observed that in RV., iii, 55,19, the tvasta savita visvarupah is a person of whom it is said: Puposa prajah purudha jajana. And it need not be especially emphasized that in RV, x, 10, 5, the act of procreation forms the main topic

"Concerning the demon Visvarupa, we have to observe that he, like Tvastar, is a possessor of cow-herds, cf. RV., x, 8, 8-9; 76,3,3. One can scarcely avoid associating him with the crowd of demons in the Rig-Veda, Vrtra above all, but also Susna, Kuyava, Namuci, etc., who are often said to be possessors of cattle-herds. Moreover, he appears to be identical with the three-headed dragon Azi Dahaka in the Avesta, whom Oraetaona killed just as Trita killed Visvarupa. If this suggestion be correct, he is a native local deity of the type of the Nagas. As such he was above all a deity of fertility of procreation to whom one turned to obtain human as well as animal offspring. As is well-known, this is still done. Childless women in India still with confidence approach the Nagas, believing them to be able to satisfy their ardent desire for children.

"People think that if he is not propitiated, the calves will die and the cows dry up" [Oldham, "Native Faiths in the Himalayah" (The Contemporary Review, March, 1885), 407 412].

"In summing up, let us return to Vedic conditions. From what has been said above it appears to me obvious that the name Visvarupa, an appellative of Tvastar and of certain serpent demons alike, must allude to their power over the cattle and its procreative activities. For there is not the slightest reason for suggesting that Visvarupa had originally a somewhat hazy abstract sense; nor does it seem credible

that the serpent demon was thought of as 'possessing all forms' Visvarupa, according to my humble opinion, can mean nothing but 'presiding over, procreating the whole animal creation, all animal shapes."

It will certainly furnish one with a clue to Narayana lying on the body of snake Vasuki with the goddess Lakshmi at his feet in the vast ocean of deluge, meditating the creation of the world.

The Bharata Samhita is the book of Ancient Indian Nations, as the very name implies. It records not the possessions nor accounts of the past rulers as history does, but elucidates the treasures of heaven acquired by the sages of Ancient India, whose footprints in the sands of time have been the guide and gospel of religion for realising the great Creator of the world and the way to approach Him, to hold communion with Him, so that peace, happiness and joy may reign through devotion, faith, wisdom and love. It enunciates the immortality of the soul and immortality of the man who can successfully make union with the Omnipotent and the Universal soul presiding over the destiny of creation and its destruction.

This was sought to be impressed upon the minds of the public by examples emanating from the poetic inspirations of Valmiki and Veda-Vyasa in accordance with the growing demand of the ages. The philosophy of love, religion and wisdom became the theme of the Indian, Epics rather than the history of events or chronology of famous kings who ruled the earth. The Indian Epics deal with the spiritual world.

ANCIENT EDUCATION.

The Indian Epic is not written as a history of past events but records what education means; who fashioned and modelled the ideals for society in the religious and spiritual worlds. The world is not a collection of individuals, bare facts and figures lying side by side with incidents of life. The relation between man and the world is something more than this. Nature conceals the Creator, but man reveals Him in himself and in creation. The relation of philosophy and religion is somewhat reciprocal. The question of the truth of any knowledge and the ultimate nature of one's knowledge are in fact the two sides of the question with which philosophy and religion deal and in which real man is interested.

In ancient India parents took no responsibility for the education of their children. The pupils were lodged with their preceptors, who did their best to inculcate in them knowledge, traditions and practical training, while the communal life of the training rubbed off the bad manners acquired in home life under indulgent parents. The teachers taught according to the individual aptitudes of their pupils. These did not learn what did not interest them. There was no compulsion from the parents. The ancient sages took care of their mental as well as bodily exercises with the object of developing in them the instincts of true gentlemen. Thus they made the survivals of crude savagery into social, moral and religious beings. Honesty, truthfulness and morality the students learnt in Vedic sylvan schools. The son of Brihaspati learnt his lesson under Bhrigu, though his own father was as capable of teaching him.

There was no separate arrangement for the education of the children of kings. They learnt their lessons side by side with the sons of plebeians and patricians. It is thus that Drona and Drupada learnt their lessons together and formed a close friendship. All were then trained morally and spiritually. There was one supreme idea in education—that the top of the ladder could only be reached by qualifications and by putting into practice what one learnt, and not through wealth or descent.

To earn money and enjoy luxury were not the sole aim of the rising generation. Fame and spiritual salvation were then the be-all and end-all of existence. The caste system, which made Sudras a race of donkeys to carry on their backs the landlords (kings), teachers (priests and sages) and capitalists or business managers (Vyasas) was not there. It was the

age of selfishness which ushered in the caste system and civilisation or education, when everybody tried to do as little as possible and to grow rich at the expense of others' labour. The middle class grew rich by trade through the products of the working class, paying them barely the cost of production. The propertied class lived as luxuriously as possible, maintaining the priests and sages, the great teachers of the day, at the expense of all classes under their rule, hunting and waging war with neighbours to deprive them of their possessions, their wealth or their daughters. The religion of the caste system was eventually a virtue of dollars. The Kshatriyas and Vyasas were the honoured twice-born men who had to be waited upon by Brahmans, the most highly honoured servile politicians who acted as teachers, priests, ministers, doctors, minstrels and authors of the day.

In the organised body of men, professional and business men carried the propertied people on their backs and were sometimes kicked and disgraced. The great Epics furnish such examples. King Nahusa, father of Yayati, is said to have kicked the great sage Agastya and a Brahman of rigid vows, Kasyap by name, was thrown down by the rash driving of a proud rich Vaisya, whom King Indra did not punish but solaced the lame Brahman with good advice. 'Discretion is the better part of valour' was the lesson read by him. Bali, Prahlad, Nomuchi and Manuki succeeded in gaining happiness in following the wise motto referred to above when they were deprived of their property.* The dignity of a Brahman among men was said to be much coveted. The great Indra read the Brahmana a good lesson—the folly of being idle and depending on others in spite of all his great learning. God blessed him with hands, and he must use them to be successful. He impressed on him not to waste his valuable life and commit suicide out of cupidity. He admonished him to be contented and explained that the caste system was introduced into the country by force. For it is said by him :—

"Creatures that have hands, forsooth, become strong and acquire riches. Men are forced by men to become servants, and are repeatedly afflicted with death, imprisonment, and other punishments Although such is their condition yet even they laugh and sport and become merry. Although gifted with strength of arms, knowledge and great energy of mind, others again, follow censurable, sinful, and miserable callings. They try to change such professions to better ones, but then they are fettered by their pristine deeds and by the force of Destiny. The vilest man of the Pukkasa or the Chandala orders never wishes to renounce his life. He is quite satisfied with his birth. Mark the illusion in it". †

To root out sinful desires and to train the mind by sterner discipline was the principle of education in Ancient India. Through want man

* The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CLXXX

† The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CLXXX, verses 34-38.

becomes beast. Poverty, looked on as a great disgrace, urges man both to do and suffer everything, that he may escape from it. It leads one away from the path of virtue that directs one upward to heaven. What are laws without public virtues to enforce and record them on the public? The Indian Epics did this important service where tombs were not raised to praise the worthies after their deaths. The power of inspiring principles of goodness depends upon the bringing up, honourably and properly, of children. It is for this reason that the great Epic begins first with the system of education in Ancient India, which has as much connection as the plot itself. This is not realised by the great Western scholars who declared the Pausya and Poulama Parvas quite outside the scope of the great Epic. The great Shakespeare in one of his sonnets says :—

> "Not marble, nor the guilded monuments
> Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme."

It is thus we find with the later development of culture, that the great heroes are ingrained in the hearts of Indians according to their own tastes and inclinations. To some Durjodhana and Karna appeal more than Yudhisthira and Arjuna, and to others only Krishna (Sri Krishna) and Krishna (Draupadi) the ideal God and the ideal princess are worthy of consideration. But to the imaginative, Bhisma and Drona alone are considered great and invincible. In the lines of Milton :—

> "All power
> I give thee ; reign for ever, and assume
> Thy merits."—(Paradise Lost, III. 317)

But alas, theirs' was not lasting possession which they could gain by the use of arms like Parasurama. They fought for the justness of the cause and died in despair—a great incentive to dying with the honour which was their due; and the poet gave them this in full measure. But, as with Yudhisthira, Nature has placed nothing so high that virtue cannot reach it.

Thus the Epics, by contrasting the ages of Kasyap and Drona, indicate the ennobling character of the education of kings and priests. For this purpose the Pausya and Poulama Parvas are indispensable.

Death levels all things, but virtue it cannot touch. The excessive fury fails in its object, the joy of the wicked does not last long. Such was the case with the Kurus and their allies. The eyes and footsteps of the master are the most salutary to the living; and that actually was the task imposed upon the great ideal god Krishna, who was present in the great Epic as the master of the just side, the Pandavas and the much persecuted Lakshmi Draupadi, who belonged to nobody alone but to the just and wise, and thus she was the consort of Yudhisthira. As

leaves in a tree live only to enjoy love and join in mutual love with one another, so Draupadi is represented as the sustaining power of the Pandavas, to comfort them in their miseries and not to make them blind with envy or passion. The most important function she was made to perform was that of housewife of the distressed Pandava brothers. Practice and experience are of the greatest moment in the arts of love and chastity. The great Epic demonstrates it beautifully in the lesson Draupadi gives to the wife of Krishna in Bana Parva—not yet appreciated by any of the European scholars or students of the great Epic—for the most important task of a housewife is to know what is to be done according to the oft changing circumstances in the life of man.

Age is after all but the shadow of death. Work, not idleness, leads one to enjoyment. Noble sons do not always depend on lineage so much as upon merit and culture. True, special features and characteristics are found in families through many generations, and the sentiment of ancestry is only natural and visible in the higher races of man, and in a way has contributed in no small degree to the stability of kingdoms and the affections of a people for a king. Hereditary character is sometimes transmitted in noble families and kings as well as a strong family likeness. Moral and intellectual qualities are likewise transmissible, though it may depend upon circumstances and education to develop them in successive generations. But, after all, there are great men in all ages who are of all ranks and classes. The light of genius flashes out suddenly in an undistinguished family and a name rings through the world and may live through all time or may die with him, and the family sink back into obscurity if there is no successor to carry on.

The family name is respected when the glory descends from father to son and continues on. The Ikshakus, Maithili, Kurus, Panchalas and Yadavas, Pandavas and Bharatas are such family names of ancient India. Some families claim that their ancestors were either ancient families of the place they ruled or had come in with the conquest of the place. The Pandavas and Yadavas were distinguished as they founded an Empire with the labour of conquest and as the fruit of chivalry and wisdom, whereas the others came to their thrones by heredity and right title of lineage. In modern times it has been found that the greatest conquerors of the world sprang from the governing classes, from the ancient families or from the aristocratic order, and the distinct order of men called Kshatriya in India might have been formed with those men who were chivalrous and meritorious. Sometimes, jealous of the power of others or suffering from indignities and injustices, men have raised themselves from the middle or lower

ranks to become great heroes, statesmen, administrators and victors. Honours are well divided among all classes of men, but in India it became the monopoly of certain sections, and the four divisions of the caste system were crystallised.

The Mahabharata speaks of a certain amount of toleration, but the Ramayana shows bigotry of the worst type when the hero Rama beheaded with his own hands a Sudra ascetic. The same may equally apply to the example of chastity. Sita, in spite of the fire ordeal and positive proof of good conduct, was exiled for the sake of idle talk amongst the low and uneducated class of subjects to keep intact the high ideal of chastity from any taint of criticism whereas Draupadi was publicly declared, for state purposes, as the wife of the five Pandavas. Persecuted openly by the Kurus, yet she was honoured and loved as the beau-idle of chastity, worthy of being declared the Empress of India in the Rajasuya and Asvamedha Yajnas of Yudhisthira. In Rama's Asvamedha sacrifice a golden image of Sita was used. Could there be any better proof of her being the accepted ideal princess and Empress of India for whom Indians as a body feel proud and great ? There is the individuality in the character of Draupadi as an example of chastity, and so it is with Kunti and other women, whose names even now are uttered by pious orthodox Hindus, male and female, every morning to drive away the sin of thought and action. They are not conventional like Sabitri, Sita, Damayanti, Arundhati, etc. Technical and artistic skill as well as certain tendencies of constitution and temperament in male and female are more or less hereditary. They are marked with colour, feature, size, formation, strength, acumen and energy with the span of life in a family, which at last made the caste system descend as a hereditary distinction. Any usurper was guilty of a very grave offence, and to make an example of it the great hero Rama himself performed the part of an executioner. This, above all, gives the date of the Ramayana later than the Mahabharata as well as the employment of domesticated monkeys, etc., as the important functionaries of war.

Pascal's grand theory or formula is of recent date compared with that of old, that the chief men claimed descent either from gods or giants. It is found in every nation of the world and is not peculiar to the Hindus . The scriptures give many lines of genealogy; the Arabs believe in it. The example of Abdel Kader is well-known. "Take a thorny shrub and pour rose-water over it for a whole year, yet it will produce nothing but thorns; but take a date-tree and leave it without water in the most barren ground and it will still bring forth an abundance of luscious fruit." Plutarch describes the descent of his hero

Alexander as being fion Hercules. Caesar said : "There is in every great family the sanctity of kings, who are the rulers of men, and the majesty of the gods, who are the rulers of kings." The Indian Epics did nothing wrong in ascribing in like manner divine origin to their heroes and associating the king of Gods with them. The demands of fortune in its most adverse turn demanded the dowry of a daughter to the five Pandava Princes to weld them into one whole. The goddess of prosperity, Draupadi, is clearly mentioned and implied in the Mahabharata, for she crowned the wise man whose single pride was honesty and truth and who had by his side the strength of Bhima, the love of Arjuna, the two hands so very powerful of the true wisdom in the world. The foresight and power of beauty in the twins are mere corollaries of virtue and obedience.

No fact can be better ascertained than this, that the circumstances which surrounded and operated upon the vicissitudes of the life the Pandavas underwent were eased by the fact that they had by their side the cultured, beautiful housewife who ministered wise counsel with unselfish loving affection to govern them. Man may direct intellect, but woman directs the heart. The sacrifices that Draupadi made are little known unless discovered in the words of Kunti. She preferred to be with her husband and his brothers, to look after their comforts and watch that their miseries did not make them deviate from their course. This was more important than her own comforts or those of her child. In the severest trials of the great heroes she watched and attended them and led them to become united in the great purpose of establishing an empire of justice and equity in place of tyranny. The great poet justly exposes the unjust persecutions of tyranny on the goddess of prosperity in the dice hall, and it was she who rescued the Pandavas from the utter ignominy of slavery.

The birthplace of Pururaba is said to be on the mountain Puru, where Bhrigu used to be engaged in religious austerities, and for that the place was called Bhrigu Tunga. That was the place where Yudhisthira was instructed by Parasurama, at Varanvata by Vyasa, on the bank of Kalmashi by Bhrigu, on the Anjana mountain by Asita.* The Bidura describes the different attributes of the Pandavas, which king Dhritarastra admitted as follows when addressing Yudhisthira in open court :—

"In you is virtue, in Arjuna is patience, and in Bhimasena is prowess. And in those foremost of men, the twins (Nakula and Sahadeva), are pure reverence and service to superiors."

* The Mbh : Bana Parva

Draupadi was not an illiterate princess who would blindly follow what her superiors would lay down. She would be the last woman to do anything against the ethics of morality and love.

Education has been a sort of tempering of the qualities of man and woman to stand the test of the trials of everyday life. It was the real birth of the religious life after due practical training in strict moral discipline at the house of the preceptor. The well-known sages of Ancient India were entrusted with the sacred duty of bringing up the children of India, and those who succeeded to the important posts were christened with the illustrious names of their preceptors. Their illustrious names are found in five well-known Gotras. Children were then considered to be the greatest assets of a royal family and they were ordinarily known by the name of the illustrious kings or their progenitors. The fruits of passion are the beasts and men, and children were the gifts of the learned saints below and the Gods above. When princes degenerated, like the sons of Dhritarashtra and their allies, they fell victims on the religious field of Kurukshettra at the hands of the Pandavas.

Education in Ancient India was a sort of political training with an eye to religious initiation before entering the worldly life by marriage. The ancient sages, as instructors of youth and priests to kings, were the leaders of thought and advancement and played a very important part in the building up of a nation. King Sagara had to banish his son when he proved cruel and unworthy to occupy the throne; King Bharata adopted Bharadvaja, killing his own children by his queens; and the illustrious Pandu went to the forest to practice asceticism like King Pratipa to be blessed with fit children to found an empire of one religion and truth. The Epic speaks of twelve kinds of sons and heirs to the throne according to the institutes of Manu :—

"O Pritha, the religious books mention of six kinds of sons who are both heirs and kinsmen, and six kinds more who are not heirs, but kinsmen. I shall speak of them ; listen to me. They are—1 Aurocha (the son begotton by one's own self on his own wife); 2 Pranita (the son begotton on one's own wife by an accomplished person); 3. Parikrita (the son begotten on one's wife by a man for a pecuniary consideration) ; 4. Paunarvava (the son begotton on a wife after her husband's death); 5. Kanin (the son born in maidenhood); 6. Kunda (the son born of a woman who had intercourse with four persons); 7. Dattya (the son given by another); 8. Krita (the son bought from another); 9. Upakrita (the son coming to one out of gratitude) ; 10. Sayang Upagata (the son coming to give himself away); 11. Shada (the son born of a pregnant bride); 12. Hina Fonidhrita (the son born of a wife of a lower caste). On the failure of getting offspring of the first class, the mother should try to get the offspring of the next class, and so on. At the time of emergency (failure of offspring), men raise up sons by their accomplished

younger brothers. O Pritha, the self-created Manu has said that men, failing to obtain a son of their own, might raise up excellent virtue-giving sons by others."*

Epic literature speaks of many forms of marriage, but confines itself to one form called Swayambhara, with which the Epic heroes were introduced in the worldly entrance of life. In the Swayambhara form of marriage the girl was given to the successful competitor and performer of a named skilful feat at arms or left entirely to the choice of the advanced, cultured bride from the assembled princes of India, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. This is the most cosmopolitan form of marriage, where preference was given to merit or freedom was given to the girl, who was considered quite fit to choose the best partner of life after knowing the qualities of each of the suitors present in the assembly. It was then a question of practical public demonstration of merit, learning, skill and ability of the princes and princesses of India, who liked to be united in the marriage bond and not merely accept a political caste union which smelt of rank and heredity.

There were the sages who tested the capacities of youths before they were trained and followed a distinct profession, as is mentioned in the Pousya Parva. The caste system eventually became a question of merit and profession. People were then admitted into any class of profession after due test or examination. Success in life depended upon the cultural education of a man and a woman. The public were interestsed in a life of usefulness, and success in their ideals could make the nation materially and spiritually great. They believed that peace and prosperity depended more upon spiritual progress than upon mere material success. The caste system was thus eventually crystallised on the basis of religion and profession.

* The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter CXX, p. 171, Verses 32–36.

INDO-ARYAN WORSHIP.

The Indian Veda is universally held to be the most ancient record of the origin and progress of Indo-Aryan worship. It is held in the highest esteem by the Hindus of India as being a revelation from the great creator of the universe. Its internal evidence demolishes the theory of emigration from West to East. The language in which the ancient Vedic hymns were composed does not belong to any place in the West. but it still lingers as the language of India and is still current in the mouths of Indians. Besides, these Vedic hymns with the names of the Gods and their worshippers give the surest indication of the place of their conception.

The primitive Aryan, living in the midst of naked nature, was forced to read Nature by observation and meditation. Necessity is the mother of invention, and the primitive Aryans lived in caves and were provided with natural instincts. They learnt the languages of birds and beasts and were struck with their intelligence, love and gratitude. The primitive Aryan learnt many things from observation of the animal life and natural phenomena around him. The old bird and animal tales of India recorded in the Epics testify to the truth of this. The illiterate peasants and boatmen can even now read from the clouds above or from the heat in the water of the river as to when rain will fall.

The primitive Aryan mind in the process of development found that beneficent Nature had provided everything for the comfort of created beings and was struck with awe when it witnessed the savage fury with which flood. fire, wind, thunder, etc., destroyed everything and caused misery and death. This is the genesis of human worship in India and elsewhere. The ancient people believed that Gods could work miracles and turn the course of Nature for the benefit of their faithful worshippers. It is for this they offered whatever they held dear to appease the wrath of the presiding deities of Nature and to propitiate them. This sacrifice is the keynote of the first human worship and prayer recorded in the Veda.

With the decadence of this school of thought the spirit of the departed was deified along with the spirit which every natural object possessed. The worship of the spirit of the departed ancestor was called "Pitrijajna", and the worship of the guardian spirits of natural phenomena in Indra, Varuna, Sun, Moon, Rudra, Yama, etc., was called "Devajajna." The materialistic Pasupat cult (Rudra worship) brought

in its train a struggle for power and enjoyment with selfish motives. The public and private sacrifices for controlling and directing human society by the master minds of India, called Rishis, brought in its wake misery instead of prosperity on account of the vanity, reckless luxury and abuse of power of the performers of the sacrifices. Animals and inferior men were sacrificed at the sweet will of powerful men. The priests and kings were the patrons of public and private sacrifices. The Veda records the fight between the Gods and Asuras and the Epics record the fights between Gods and Gods, Gods and Asuras, Kings and Kings, Kings and subjects, priests and priests, and priests and kings.

This created a situation which led to the formation of the nucleus of the higher conception, of a Supreme God acceptable to all, not as a combatant, but as an impartial Creator and observer of right and wrong in the universe. Kapila was the first to conceive the idea of such a God. The Supreme God is not like the Vedic Gods, who were thought to be actively engaged in rewarding or punishing those who did or did not acknowledge and offer oblations to them. The God Kapila conceived is the meditative God Narayana, who is not indentified with the creation but is above it Kapila held that the works of creation are carried on by Prakriti and Purusha in combination. The Vedic hymns and sacrifices or the Hindu trinity of Gods are not necessary for the realisation of the Supreme God Narayana. The one syllable "OM" is sufficient praise of Him and is sufficient for His propitiation and for the purpose of meditation and concentration of mind to hold communication with God above and the soul within. This the Epics and Puranas describe in the hari kari of the Vedic gods' heads and the worshipping in its place of a God with the head of a horse, called Hayagriva Narayana appeared in the 10th Mandala of Rig-Veda as worshipping Nara, the father of the organic system of human society, and in the Epic as the revealer of the spiritual conception of God which could put an end to the selfish motives with which the Vedic gods and Asuras, kings and people and priests fought amongst themselves for power and enjoyment.

The Epic structures set forth the conception of Narayana in its different phases from the very beginning of this worship. The many legends which circled round the Epics show the development of Narayana worship.

The goddess of prosperity, Lakshmi, appeared to Indra, King of heaven, deserting the Asuras as they had become vain, presumptuous and unclean. Atri's son Dattatreya was the preceptor of Prahlada and Kartabiryarjuna, two very famous personages of Ancient India. Prahlad

was the follower of non-co-operation. He was the prominent example of the non-resisting follower of Devajajna instead of Pitrijajna. The true God of Love killed Envy, the father of profane love and kingly power. Kartabiryarjuna was described as having one thousand hands and being one of the greatest of the monarchs of India. Ravana was defeated by him and his life was spared at the intercession of his ancestors Pulastya and Galaba. This represented that the life of Ravana was saved by Pitrijajna.

The God's Avatar Baman (Dwarf) stopped the sacrifice of king Bali, which had been begun with the assistance of the great Rishi Sukra. The Rishi, finding out the real identity of the Dwarf-Brahman, tried to dissuade the Asura king Bali from granting the Brahmin's prayer in the same way as his descendant had done in the snake sacrifice of king Janmejoya in the Astika Parva. Bali did not listen to his preceptor and was blest with the sight of God covering the upper and nether regions of the universe with his two feet and placing the third foot on the head of the vain king who was making a boastful show of charity. Against this stands the story of a poor Brahman Rishi ascending to heaven for the gift of a jot of barley. In Ancient India a king was the custodian of his subjects' tributes for their good, but when he abused it in wreckless luxury for his vanity his action was condemned in that way. But for emulating the examples of pious people and granting the boon in spite of his preceptor's remonstrances, he was rewarded with the sight of God, and his conscience translated him to the lower region of earth to express deep regret for his vaunted feat of charity. This is the acceptance of God Narayana by the Asura king Bali.

All these examples were improved upon when the Rishi Atharva, father of Brahma Vidya, appeared in the field. His son Dadhichi was sacrificed as he belonged to the materialistic world and had become a follower of the Pasupat cult in the first sacrifice of Daksha, where Vishnu (Narayan) was worshipped. The lesson of self-sacrifice was conspicuous in the family of a Rishi imbued with Brahma Vidya. The bone of Dadhichi was necessary to kill the Asura king Britra. How the Pouranic conception was improved upon is evident from the example of Dadhichi. Nor is this all. The kings of India, at the instance of the illustrious Rishis, became the followers of the two forms of worship, *viz.*, the Pitrijajna and Devajajna, and were respectively given the credit of descending from the Moon and the Sun, the deities of the night and the day. The Rishis who performed the important task of self-differentiating unity in the imaginary cycle of time called Mannantara were represented as constellations of stars. Thus the most renowned

seven Rishis of India are believed to have been translated into seven planetary bodies. They were all Vedic Rishis worshipped in the Pouranic world.

Like the earth, heaven too is a place of trial, according to ancient Hindu ideas. King Nahusa went to heaven, but as soon as he failed to restrain his senses he was hurled back to earth and was transformed into a snake. The idea of a devil being transformed into a snake is world-wide. The Hindus worship the God Narayana as lying over the snake, while the Christians have it thrown down from heaven.

The Gods of Heaven, Earth, Sea, Fire, Air and Sky were once made in plastic form and with poetic beauty. Historical events gave an impulse and impetus to personification of intellectual and moral qualities, and every great event, such as acquisition of new territories or victory over rivals, entailed worship of the Gods and feasting of the priest who laid the foundation of the law of rituals. Thus religious as well as political institutions emanated from the kings and their high priests. In this way a number of deities arose to preside over birth, growth and prevention of disasters and diseases in Ancient India, but few of them survived when philosophers directed their assault against religious superstitions and degenerate forms of mysticism.

Then a complete change took place at the sacrifices of the great god, Vishnu, whose form, after the killing of the Asuras, Madhu and Kaitava, was represented as having the head of a horse. This is the 'Hayagriba Upakhayan' mentioned in the Taittriya Aranyaka, Pancha-vimsa Brahmana and in the Mahabharata. This was the end of the Hindu Triad worship and the beginning of the worship of the meditative and impartial Narayana, with which the Bharat Samhita, the source of the two Indian Epics, begins in the Narayana section of the Mahabharata. It ultimately came to be inculcated that a Brahmin's duties and salvation did not lie in the way of sacrifice, but in that of a rigid course of moral life, by practice of Pranayam and other religious austerities.

Ancestor worship in its widest sense did not mean only the worship of the dead ancestors, but included the living parents too. The religion of the early Indo-Aryans as well as of many other people arise out of the belief that the performance of a certain act enjoined by the books of religion yields some definite merit. That the Aryans in India rose to a higher spiritual plane through the cult of Narayana has been already shown, and this was propounded by the Bharata Samhita and the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana. But in the course of the change from a materialistic to a renunciatory religion, the same stories were used with large modifications, both in substance as well as in form. If this is

understood clearly there will be no difficulty in tracing the development of the Epic themes from their earliest original versions, some of which are preserved in the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana and Bharata Samhita of the Mahabharata and Puranas.

The stories which centre round ancestor worship are many and varied, and range from the grotesque to the sublime. The story of Samkha and Likhita, sons of Jaigisavya, to whom are assigned the authorship of two Samhitas, has an exclusive interest unconnected with the other stories which became later on part of the Epic legends. Samkha and Likhita were two great Rishi brothers, sons of Yaigisavya, who lived on the bank of Vahuka river at some distance from each other. Once upon a time the Rishi Likhita called on his elder brother Samkha, but at the time his brother was away. Being hungry he plucked some fruit from the trees of his Asharama (hermitage) and ate them. When Samkha came he found his brother eating the fruits from his trees and accused him of theft, and sent him to the king to receive punishment at his hands. The king thought that it was a trifling offence and did not want to punish him, but on Likhita insisting on receiving punishment according to the laws of the realm, the king had no other alternative but to order his two hands to be cut off as a punishment for theft. Then Likhita came back to his elder brother, who advised him to make offerings to his ancestors, the great Rishis, and the gods. Through the favours of his ancestors Likhita got back his two hands. The story ends with the moral, which is given in this connection, that whoever discharges his duties enters into a spirit of Holy Communion with his ancestors. The king who fulfils his manifold duties receives the approbation of his ancestors and becomes successful (Santi Parva, Chapter 231). The story of the matricide of Parashu-Rama, who had lost his glory through his humiliation at the hand of Ikshvaku Rama, got back his old vigour by making offerings to his ancestors at the water of the river Badhu Sara (Bana Parva, Chapter 99, and also referred to in Poulama Parva).

The Mahabharata explains that the meaning of offering oblation to the dead is nothing but the worship of the God Narayana (Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXLVI).

"Narada said:—It is from that Supreme Deity that Brahma, the grandfather of all the worlds, sprang in days of yore. That Brahma, otherwise called Prameshthi filled with cheerfulness, caused my father (Daksha) to come into being. I was the son of Brahma, created before all others, by his will. O righteous and illustrious one, I am performing these rites in honour of the departed manes for the sake of Narayana and according to those ordinances that have been ordained by himself. The illustrious Narayana is the father, mother and grandfather. In all sacrifices performed in honour of the departed manes, it is that Lord of the universe who is worshipped. On one occasion, the gods, who were father, taught their children the Shrutis. Having lost their knowledge of the Shrutis, the fathers had to acquire it

again from those sons to whom they had communicated it. On account of this incident, the sons, who had thus to communicate the Mantras to their fathers, acquired the status of fathers. Forsooth, what the gods did on that occasion is well-known to you two. Sons and fathers had thus to adore each other. Having first spread some blades of Kusha grass, the gods and the departed manes placed three funeral cakes thereon and thus adored each other. I wish to know, however, the reason why the departed manes in days of yore acquired the name of Pindas.*"

The inter-relation of the great Epic and the institutes of Manu is clear. The principal ancient methods of salvation were Devajajna and Pitrijajna. The mythology behind the Pitrijajna is given in the same chapter in the mouth of the god Narayana as follows :—

" Nara and Narayana said : -The earth, in days of yore, with her belt of seas, disappeared from view. Govinda, taking the form of a gigantic boar, raised her up. Having replaced the earth in her former position, that foremost of Purushas, his body smeared with water and mud, began to do what was necessary for the world and its inhabitants When the Sun reached the meridian, and the hour, therefore, came for saying the midday prayers, the powerful Lord, suddenly shaking off three balls of mud from his tusk, placed them upon the Earth, O Narada, having previously spread thereon certain blades of grass. The powerful Vishnu dedicated those balls of mud to his own self, according to the rites laid down in the eternal ordinance. Regarding the three balls of mud that the powerful Lord had shaken off from his tusks as funeral cakes, he then, with sesame seeds that arose from the heat of his own body, himself performed the rite of dedication, sitting with face turned towards the East. That foremost of gods then, moved by the desire of establishing rules of conduct for the inhabitants of the three worlds, said these words. Vrishakapi said:—I am the Creator of the worlds. I am determined to create those that are to be called departed manes.—Saying these words, he began to think of those high ordinances that should regulate the rites to be performed in honour of the departed manes. While thus doing, he beheld that the three balls of mud, shaken off his tusk, had fallen towards the south. He then said to himself,—Those balls, shaken off my tusk, have fallen on the Earth towards the south of her surface. Led by this, I declare that these should be known henceforth by the name of departed manes. Let these three that are of no particular shape, and that are only round, come to be considered as Pitris in the world. Thus do I create the eternal Pitris. I am the father, the grandfather and the great grandfather and I should be considered as living in these three Pindas. There is no one that is superior to me. Who is there whom I myself, may adore with rites? Who, again, is my father in the universe? I myself am my grandfather. I am, indeed, the grandfather and the father, I am the one cause. Having said these words, that God of Gods, *viz.* He called Vrishakapi, offered those funeral cakes, O learned Brahmana, on the breast of the Varaha mountains, with elaborate rites. By those rites he adored his own self, and having finished the adoration, disappeared there and then. Hence the Pitris are called Pinda. This is the root of the designation. According to the words given vent to by Vrishakapi at that time, the Pitris receive the worship offered by all. They who celebrate sacrifices in honour of and adore the departed manes, the gods, the preceptor or other reverend senior, guests arrived at the house, kine, superior Brahmanas, the goddess Earth, and their mothers, in thought, word, and deed, are said to adore and sacrifice to Vishnu himself. Entering the bodies of all existent creatures, the illustrious Lord is the Soul of all things. Unaffected by happiness or misery, his attitude towards all is equal. Gifted

* The Mbh. Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXLVI, pp. 570-571, verses 5—11.

with greatness, and of great soul, Narayana had been said to be the soul of all things in the Universe.*"

The celestial Rishi Narada found Narayana in Svetadvipa.† The white Narayana and white island where the Rishi Narada found him give good grounds to conclude that the name Svetadvipa owed its origin more to the place being reputed to have been the abode of the White Narayana in Satya Juga, the first cycle of time, than anything else. For it is said in the Annusashana Parva that the name of Svetadvipa owed its origin in all probability to the Royal Sage Sveta, who became famous by killing Andhaka. Sveta was a follower of the Pasupat cult, but when he was perhaps converted to the Narayana cult he may have gone to Sveta Island. Siva heard from Brahma all about Narayana, called the Tramvaka-Brahma discourse in Santi Parva, Chapter 350-351. Nor is this all. There is the most interesting discourse between the two great heroes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Hanumana and Bhima, who were said to be bretheren, in Bana Parva, Chapter 168. Hanumana enlightened Bhima about the important change of colours of Narayana with different cycles of time and the true implication of Narayana worship. The interesting portions bearing on the subject are given below:—

"O child, in the Krita Yuga there were no celestials, no Danavas, no Gandharvas, no Yakshas, no Rakshasas, and no Nagas. There was neither buying nor selling. The Sama, the Rick, the Yayu (Vedas) did not exist. There was no manual labour. The necessaries of life were procured only by thinking for them. The only Dharma was then renunciation In that Yuga there was neither disease nor the decay of the senses. There was neither malice, nor pride, nor hypocrisy, nor discord, nor ill will, nor cunningness, nor fear, nor misery, nor envy, nor coveteousness. For this reason, even that chief refuge of all Yugas, the supreme Brahma, was attainable to all. The white cloth-wearing Narayana (also was the soul of all creatures).

... ..One uniform Soul was the object of their meditation, there was but one religion and one ordinance. Though they had different characters, they followed one Veda, and they had one religion. According to the divisions of time, they led the four modes of life without aiming at any object. Thus they obtained (final) emancipation."

"Now hear from me all about the Treta Yuga, in which sacrifices were introduced (in the world). (In this age) virtue decreased by a quarter and Narayana assumed a red colour. Men practised truth and devoted themselves to religion and religious rites. Thus sacrifices were introduced, and many religious rites came to be performed In the Treta Yuga men began to devise to attain an object and they attained to it by performing (religious) acts and (giving away) gifts. Men never deviated from virtue, and they were always engaged in asceticism and the bestowal of gifts. The four orders were devoted to their respective duties and they performed (religious) rites. Such were the men in the Treta Yuga.

* The Mbh. Chapter CCCXLVI, Page 570, Shanti Parva, Verses 12—28.
† The Mbh. Chapter 343, Shanti Parva.

"In the Dwapara Yuga virtue decreased by half; Vishnu assumed a yellow colour; and the Vedas became divided into four parts. Then some learnt all the four Vedas; some again only three, some two, and some did not know even the Rick. The Sastras having been thus divided, (religious) acts also (naturally) multiplied. Mostly influenced by passion, men engaged in asceticism and gifts. As men had no capacity to study the entire Veda, it came to be divided into several parts. And as the intellect (of men) deteriorated, few were devoted to truth. When men fall off from truth, they became subject to various diseases,—lust overtakes men and natural calamities fall on them. Being affected by these, some then betake to asceticism. Others perform sacrifices with the desire of enjoying worldly luxuries or of obtaining heaven (and its pleasure). O son of Kunti, thus in the Dwapara age men became degenerated on account of their impiety.

"In the Kali Yuga, only one quarter of virtue remains. When this age appears, Keshava (Vishnu assumes a black colour. The Vedas, the Institutes, the virtue, the sacrifices, and religious observances all fall into disuse. Then it (excessive rain), draught, rats, locusts, birds and king diseases, lassitude, anger, deformities, natural calamities, anguish and fear of famine take possession of the world. As this Yuga passes on, virtue becomes daily weaker. As virtue becomes weak, all creatures degenerate, and as creatures degenerate, their nature also undergoes deterioration. The religious acts performed at this waning of the Yuga produce contrary effects. Even those who live for several Yugas must conform to their changes."*

The Indo-Aryan form of worship through sacrifices assumed a pseudo-political character with the kings of India and their priests when the sacrifices began to be undertaken more for the destruction of enemies or for the attainment of specific temporal success than for the spiritual amelioration of Hindu Society or for the spiritual emancipation of the individual performers.

The implication of the Astika Parva and its connection with previous Parvas are not hard to find. The moral and spiritual teachings that converge round king Janmejoya's snake sacrifice form the bedrock of the present Mahabharata. The performance of this Yajna was not completed. The cruel purpose for which it was undertaken was shown in its true colours by the Rishi Astika when he asked from the king the boon which implied the abandonment of the objective of the sacrifice. The word Astika means a theist. The obvious interpretation of this abandonment of the snake sacrifice through Astika would be that the cruel ceremonial rituals involving sacrifices of animals or extermination of Nagas or enemies were then subordinated to higher ethical and spiritual conceptions embodied in the Pancha Ratra instituted by Narada and the Narayana cult. Similar is the implication of the result of Parasurama's Aswamedha sacrifice, which he had performed after decimating the Kshatriya race and in which, on his making a gift of the Earth as the sacrificial fee to the Rishi Kasyap, the latter banished him to the Southern Ocean or the Mahendra Mountain in Orissa by asking him to retire from the earth which he had given away.

*The Mah. Chapter CXLIX, Vana Parva, verses 13—17, 20—21 and 23—38, pp. 217—218.

It is quite evident from even a superficial perusal of the Mahabharata that a great change was coming over the earlier ritualistic sacrifices. Greater stress was laid on the performance of the moral duties of the respective caste divisions of the Aryans. The life of the Brahmin consisted of a continuous series of sacrifices through which he must seek salvation. The great sacrifices, such as Aswamedha, Raja-Suya and others, which were performed by various kings at long intervals, could not be the means of salvation and expiation as was at first sought to be inculcated, but their important place in the social and political life of the people was recognised. Cruel practices connected with them were under-valued and forbidden. From this point of view one sees a consistent connection between the account of the uncompleted snake sacrifice of Janmejoya and the teachings of Bidura and Sanat Sujata in Udyoga Parva*, where the duties of the Brahmins as leading to their complete bliss in the hereafter are mentioned. Most of them relate to their daily avocations. Sanat Sujata, the teacher of Narada, emphasises the distinction between death and immortality and explains the means by which immortality can be attained. The Brahmin is defined as a person who, although he lives amongst relatives, remains a stranger to them in respect of his actions. This certainly refers to his contemplations and Niskama Dharma.

The view that the Mahabharata was a later development of the Bharata Samhita is universally held and is also borne out by the text of the Mahabharata. Professor Winternitz, who could not see the inter-connection between the different strata of the Mahabharata, thinks that Pausya Parva (Mahabharata I, 3), the Markendeya section of the Vana Parva and the Narayana section of Shanti Parva lie outside the scope of the Epic proper, and disagrees with Professor Oldenberg, who sees in them an earlier stage of Epic poetry. If the sacrificial origin of the Bharata Samhita was properly understood by students of the Mahabharata, they would have a sure grasp of the inter-relation between the different themes of the Mahabharata and the gradual development of the Epic.

The sacrifice, which was an important educational institution, formed an essential feature of Indo-Aryan life. It focussed the activities and knowledge derived from the various deeds performed by the good and the wise. A man, according to this view, has to lead a life of activity, and unless he attains wisdom and true knowledge by actions, according to the Shastric injunctions, he cannot attain bliss and

* Udyoga Parva, Chapters 49 and 50.

happiness. From what has been said already, it will be quite clear that the sacrifice was the pivot of the Bharata Samhita and that whatever pertained to the performance of the Yajna belonged to the earliest stratum of the Mahabharata.

The natural forces which the early Aryans worshipped consisted of five elements—Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Sky. Of these Fire came to be regarded by them as the most powerful, whose favour they sought to win or whose wrath they tried to avert by offering sacrifices of objects that were dear to them. In this way the sacrifices had come to occupy a very important place among the religious institutions of the Indo-Aryan race. These sacrifices were of three kinds, the Brahma Yajna, in which the Vedic Sandhya Gayitri was recited thrice daily by the Brahmins; the sacrifices connected with the phases of the moon for conferring bliss on the ancestors, and propitiating gods and sages, etc.; and lastly, the Aswamedha and Raja-Suya sacrifices by kings, which stood on an altogether different footing.

"Deva" was at first a generic term to convey the meaning of what was good, great and bright, and "Asura" meant selfish and powerful. The sacrifices were at first undertaken to support the Devas against the Asuras. The sacrifices were in the nature of gratification to God, and the priests helped the worshipper in every possible way to unite the general public and their heads for making common cause against the evil-doers. The development of the idea of godhead and its different stages are not merely theoretical postulates but historical realities. The different levels of religious thought in India had been reached in very early Vedic times by different classes of the same society. The Upanishad stood against the idea of godhead propounded by the Vedic Rishis in their hymns and sacrifices, and spoke of God as simply unknowable. There is no predicate in human language which can convey and represent the true idea of God, and Upanishad defined Him with the words "Neti" "Neti" (" Not this, " Not this"). It has found an echo in the words of the Maxims of Tyre:—

"Let men know all that is divine, let them know it only."*

Indians believe in the five elements of Nature. Samkhya philosophy ascribes the creation of these five elements to the self-consciousness of the Creator. Sky is the receptacle of wind and sound; fire is generated by wind; from fire water flows from the sky, and from water the earth was created. The Sun and the Moon shine day and night and are considered to be the most important creators of earth. The Ancient Indo-Aryan race worshipped them and the kings of India traced their lineage from them, which was in fact the two

* "Let men only know, let them only love, let them only remember the Divine."

systems of worship Devajajna and Pitrijajna. This is the most important theogonic process of Indo-Asyan worship of the gods.

The whole of the Veda inculcates the worship of single gods and the great Western Vedic scholar, Professor Max Muller, divides Vedic worship into three states: Henotheistic, Polytheistic and Monotheistic Veda describes the fight between Vasistha and Visvamitra and their disciples. Vasistha, with the army of king Sudas, conquered the ten kings who crossed the five rivers of India. It proves two important things, firstly that Vasistha stopped the immigration of the West, and secondly the spiritual adviser and performer of sacrifices of a king followed him on the battlefield to give necessary advice how to fight and to help the king to win success at the opportune moment, perhaps not seen by the king himself. Vedic Gods were invoked with the names of priests and the priests were worshipped almost like gods, for the priests, versed in the mysteries and incantations of the Atharva Veda, often displayed great occult powers and worked miracles for their disciples.

"Vasistha and Visvamitra, who with their families have both been the Purohitas of king Sudas, did more for the king than chanting hymns to implore the aid of their gods.......The importance of their office is best shown by the violent contest which these two families of the Vasisthas and Visvamitras carried on, in order to secure for themselves the hereditary dignity of Purohita. There was a similar contest between the priests at the court of Asamati, a descendent of Ikshvaku. He, not satisfied with his four Purohitas, Bandhu, Subandhu, Srutabandhu, and Viprabandhu, who were brothers and belonged to the family of the Gaupayanas, dismissed them, and appointed two new priests (mayavinau). These new Purohitas, seeing that the Gaupayanas used incantations against the life of king Asamati, retaliated, and caused by their charms the death of one of them, Subandhu. Thereupon the other three brothers composed a song to appease the wrath of the two priests, and to save their own lives. This song and some others connected with the same contest, form part of the 8th Ashtaka of the Rig-Veda. The very fact of the office of Purohita being hereditary shows that it partook of a political character. It seems to have been so at an early time. In a hymn of the Rig-Veda, i. 94.6, where Agni is invoked under several priestly names, he is called, Janusha Purohita or Purohita by birth. Cf. i. 107. 8. And we find several instances where priests, if once employed by a royal family, claim to be employed always. When Janamejaya Parikshita ventured to perform a sacrifice without the Kasyapas, he was forced by the Asitamrigas, a family of the Kasyapas, to employ them again. When Visvantara Saushadmana drove away the Syaparnas from his sacrifice, he was prevailed upon by Rama Margaveya to call them back. All this shows that the priestly office was of great importance in the ancient times of India. The original occupation of the Purohita may simply have been to perform the usual sacrifices; but, with ambitious Brahmans, it soon became a stepping-stone to political power.*"

"One of the greatest events in the life of Vasistha was the victory which king Sudas achieved under his guidance. But in the Mandala of the Vasisthas, the same event is sometimes alluded to as belonging to the past, and in one of the hymns

* Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature", pp. 485—487. and p. 483.

ascribed to the same Vasishtha we read: 'Committing our sons and offspring to the same good protection which Aditi Mitra, and Varuna like guardians, give to Sudas, let us not make our gods angry.*

"The original institution of a Purohita, as the spiritual adviser of a king or a chief, need not be regarded as the sign of a far advanced hierarchical system. The position of the Brahmans must have been a peculiar one in India from the very beginning. They appear from the very first as a class of men of higher intellectual power than the rest of the Aryan colonists; and their general position, if at all recognised, could hardly have been different from that of Vasishtha in the camp of Sudas."*

The Brahmin sages, according to the evidence of the Vedas, Puranas and the Epics, were the vanguard of Aryan culture.

It is well-known that the co-operation between the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, one having the allegiance of the general public for their learning and character and the other exercising political power over them, was secured at the sacrifices for their mutual benefit. The Asvamedha and Raja-Suya sacrifices were primarily camouflaged political institutions under a religious guise. In them the various princes of India were not called upon to render homage as vassals to one superior overlord, but were merely requested to contribute to the general expenses of the sacrifices. The acknowledgment of the suzerainty of the king intending to perform the horse sacrifice was secured not by an open invasion of the territories of the other kings of India, but merely by making them allow the horse of the sacrifice to pass through their countries unmolested. Only those who had rival pretensions and wanted themselves to celebrate a similar sacrifice challenged the right of the performer by seizing the horse. Thus the horse sacrifice minimised the task of an ambitious ruler aspiring for the overlordship of India, causing as little trouble and bloodshed as possible. Many of the kings contributed willingly to the expenses of the sacrifice considering it also as a meritorious act.

In a Raja-Suya sacrifice kings from various parts of India assembled at the place where it was being performed under the auspices of a ruler belonging to their class. They did not come as his vassals, as will be evident from the speech made by king Sisupala at the Raja-Suya sacrifice of Yudhisthira. The successful performer of this sacrifice reaped not only spiritual merit from it, but also an abstract claim to priority among the Rulers of India in the religious sphere. He undertook this ceremony for the expiation of his sins and the propagation of religion at the instance of the Brahmins, who were pledged to the support of his cause by the lavish gifts which they obtained from the king. These Brahmins were the natural leaders of society and

***Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pp. 488-89.**

their taking part in the sacrifice strengthened the cause of the particular king among the general public of India. Furthermore, after receiving gifts from one king at the Raja-Suya sacrifice, they could not, with any conscience, advise another king or engage themselves to another king for a similar rival sacrifice during the life-time of the previous performer of a sacrifice like the Raja-Suya or Asvamedha.

The Brahmins who flocked to the sacrifice at the invitation of the king did not do so merely for personal reasons. The Vedic hymns were as yet confined to a small class of Brahmins. No one could take part in the sacrifice unless he knew the Vedic hymns by heart with correct pronunciation and reading, and hence the knowledge of these hymns became widespread among the Brahmins. Those who displayed great learning and were renowned for their piety, received titles of distinction at the sacrifices, such as Rishi, Muni, Maharshi and Brahmarshi. The gifts which they received were utilised for the support of the great teaching institutions and universities with which they were associated. In these universities, the Vedic hymns and the Vedangas were studied and popularised among the Brahmins. Thus these sacrifices were not only great instruments for the extension of political power by the ambitious Rulers of India, but were the chief means by which the culture of the race was preserved and perpetuated.

It was at these sacrifices that the laws of good conduct or Dharma were promulgated by the Brahmin sages and were enforced by the kings. The spread of Aryan culture in the Aryavarta required such institutions as the sacrifices, which were the distinguishing characteristic of the Indo-Germanic culture as against the idolatrous practices of the aborigines, which it replaced. The institution of sacrifices was developed from this motive. The elaborate rituals which were a part of the ceremony of the sacrifices necessitated the creation of a priestly class, and this class became the exponent of the culture of the Aryan race.

It was realised at an early period of Aryan civilisation in India that the cause of the Aryans could only be upheld in India by close cooperation between Brahmins and Kshatriyas. It is said in the Mahabharata that a dispute took place between Atri and Gautama at the horse sacrifice of king Vainya, when the king was praised as Indra by Atri, to which objection was taken by Gautama, who maintained that the king could not be addressed as such for the epithet 'Indra' could only be applied to the Heavenly King, Indra. The dispute was settled by the divine sage Sanat Kumar, who said.

' As (when) fire united with the wind burns down forests, so (when) a Brahman's energy is united with that of a Kshatriya and *vice versa*, it consumes all enemies."

"The king is noted for establishing religion and he is the protector of his subjects. He is (like) Indra (a protector of all beings), like Sukra (a propounder of morals), like Brihaspati (an advisor) and (therefore) he is justly styled the ruler of our destiny"

"Is there (therefore) anybody who considers himself abovd worshipping the individual to whom such appellations as Projapati (the lord of all creatures) Virata, Emperor, Kshatriya, lord of e rth and monarch are applied in praise, etc.?"

It is interesting that the son of Vena received such rich tributes from the great Rishis at the sacrifice while his father was killed for not conforming to Brahmanical ideals and laws. He had incurred their displeasure and therefore was overthrown and killed by the Non-Aryan Nishads and fishermen at the instance of the Rishis. Prithu was the first sovereign of India who performed the Raja-Suya sacrifice, at which the controversy between Atri and Gautama, mentioned above, took place. Sukracharya was his priest, Balakhilya and Sarasvata were his ministers, and the great Rishi Garga was his astrologer. The success of his reign was due to the fact that though he was a very powerful ruler who constrained the earth to yield abundance to his subjects, he never transgressed the laws and counsels of the Rishis. It is held that because he protected them from harm (Kshata), he became celebrated as the Kshatriya, a title which was subsequently transmitted to the whole ruling race of Aryabarta and the very name of the earth (Prithivi) owes its origin to him.

The theory on which the performance of a sacrifice was based, apart from its cultural implication, is that prosperity and success in this life and hereafter cannot be secured without energy and without the sacrifice of an object which is very dear to one. The story of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, throwing away his valuable ring in the sea to appease the wrath of the gods, who do not like mortals to enjoy a course of uninterrupted prosperity, is really a very early form of the superstition which prompted kings to perform sacrifices. It is evident to all those who are acquainted with the growth of ritualism that the sacrifice was not of such an elaborate character at the time of the composition of the Vedic hymns. Sacrifice then meant the sacrifice of a thing or person very dear to the offerer for the purpose of receiving a boon from the gods.

Rishis and priests did not live with their own people in crowded towns, but made their abode in forests, in plains as well as on the hills, where they lived among the aboriginal races of India, by whom they were faithfully served. The fishermen, the hunters, the wood-cutters, the Gandharvas, and Apsaras, and Rakshasas were employed by them as news-agents and even spies, and they brought information to the sages as to what was going on in the country, and in the capital, about the

conduct of the kings towards their subjects and *vice versa*, or if any foreign invasion was likely to take place and so forth. The Brahmin Rishis kept themselves abreast of all up-to-date political information through these aborigines, who had direct dealings with townsmen, the fisherman bringing his fish to sell, the hunter his meat to dispose of and the Gandharvas to entertain by music and dance in which they excelled. They could collect useful information in the course of their business transactions and this they faithfully reported to the Brahmin hermits dwelling in the forests. It is mentioned in the Epics that some of these Rishis knew the art of healing, such as Chayavana, and this furnishes us with a clue to the wide popularity which they enjoyed among the Non-Aryan people with whom they lived.

Now a sacrifice undertaken by the king at the instance of the Brahmins was meant not only to further the interests of the king but also to cement the bond of amity between the Brahmin Rishi and his Non-Aryan adherents. The Non-Aryan races had each their own religion. Some worshipped the snake, some the tree and so on. If in the Vedic sacrifices merely Vedic hymns were chanted, they could have no influence with the illiterate aborigines who had come all the way from their homes at the outskirts of the kingdom to participate in the ceremonies. In fact, the invocation of the Vedic gods alone would antagonise them, for it is well-known that the more backward the community, the more touchy it is with regard to its own beliefs and religious practices. The Brahmin sages were not only the spiritual instructors of the Aryans. They had a larger and wider mission to fulfil. They had taken upon themselves the task of spreading Aryan culture among the vast aboriginal population of India. This could only be done, not by the discarding of their superstitions and religious beliefs but by conserving and using them as the vehicle of instruction, by means of which these races were gradually brought up to the level of the culture of the conquering Aryans.

It was for this reason that out of the ten days of the sacrifice of Asvamedha, no less than six days were devoted to the instruction of the Non-Aryans. Of these Non-Aryans, all were not aborigines or backward people. The Asuras, who were addressed on the seventh day of the sacrifice, had maintained an equal contest with the Devas and were quite a powerful people, but those among them who had submitted to the Aryans were now living by usury like the Jews in mediæval Europe. So successful was the mission of the Brahmins in this respect, that not only did these aboriginal people receive instruction from the Brahmin Rishis but some of them became qualified to be the instructors of the

advanced Aryans as well. Kavasha Ailusha, who was the composer of several hymns in the tenth book of the Rig-Veda, was a son of a slave (Dasyah Putra). This is acknowledged by the Brahmins of the Aitareyins and Kaushitakins, and in the Mahabharata also Kavasha is called Nishada.* It is further said in the Harivamsa that the Sutas, who were the reciters of the Epic and the Puranas, were raised by the Brahmins from among the non-Aryan people and became important functionaries in the celebration of sacrificial ceremonies. Later on they used to supply important information to their preceptors in the old Brahmanic universities of Naimisharanya and Vadrikashrama. Eventually they came to occupy, by reason of their learning and merit, an important place in the courts of kings and were esteemed even in the institutions of the Brahmin Rishis.

It was in the Vedic institution of the sacrifice that the Bharata Samhita originated and it served the purpose of cultural adjustment between the Aryans and non-Aryans. The clue to the origin of the Bharata Samhita is to be found in the programme of the Asvamedha sacrifice given in Samkhyana Sutra. The word Bharata does not mean, as it is sometimes held to mean, a line of kings of that name, but applies to all the people of India, the rulers and the ruled; and Bharata Samhita is the compendium or guide book of the various communities living in India for their material and spiritual advancement.

But the performance of sacrifices was not within the reach of each and every one. In fact, only a very powerful and resourceful king could perform it. Yet the culture of the Vedas had now become fairly widespread, and the spiritual requirements of those who were earnest could not be met by the elaborate rituals of the Yajnas (sacrifices) which could not, for obvious reasons, be held every day. Each priestly clan had its own deities, and there were the claims of numerous conflicting gods for worship. It became necessary, therefore, to discover the root from which so many gods had sprung and to worship the one source of all gods in the daily and periodical prayers, through Pindas or oblations to the manes of the departed ancestors with whom Paramatma and the Jivatma are co-related.

Narayana was then put forward as the supreme deity and was worshipped instead of the Vedic gods. No sacrifice was completed without instruction, which latterly formed its essential part, and consequently cultural development and the inclinations of the people were properly guided through these instructions. Bharata Samhita was prepared with that in view in the family of Vasisthas under the instructions of the divine minstrel. Narada.

*Max Muller's "History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature," p. 58.

"The great Vedantist philosopher who wrote his commentary in 804 A.D. often quotes the Mahabharata as a Smriti and in discussing a verse from Book XII expressly states that Mahabharata was intended for the religious instruction of those classes who by their position are debarred from studying the Vedas and Vedanta" (Macdonnell's History of Sanskrit Literature, page 289).

But Prof. Macdonnell had before him the Tandya Brahmanas (xv-5), where it is said that the Bharata will always have Vasistha as Purohita, which might either mean a king of that name or men in general. Later on Professor Macdonnell says that the Bharata, though held in high regard by the composers of the Brahmana and set up by them as models of correct conduct, appear to have ceased to represent a political entity, for there are no longer any references to them in that sense, as to the other peoples of the day. Their name, moreover, does not occur in the tribal enumerations of the Aitereya Brahmana.

It has been stated already that no one in Vedic times was debarred because of his origin from studying the Veda. The instance of Kavasha Ailusha has been mentioned in this connection, and the fact that in the performance of the sacrifices where Vedic hymns were uttered non-Aryans were present and were addressed, disproves the later view of the exclusive character of the Vedas. The Bharata Samhita was used for religious instruction of those people who could not study or comprehend the Vedas. The Bharata Samhita was a part of the Vedic ceremonial liturgy and, as such, must be deemed to have been a continuation of Vedic literature.

The Bharata Samhita marks a distinct change in the attitude of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas towards wordly success through religious sacrifices. The Bharata Samhita, having its origin in the institution of the Yajnas, with which it was deeply connected through the instructive and explanatory stories and parables narrated by the priests, had indeed a higher moral and spiritual message.

The great gods, illustrious Rishis, prosperous kings and all inferior beings owe their origin to one great acknowledged creator, Narayana, who shows no special favour to anyone in this universe. The Bharata Samhita, which was composed in the sacrificial schools of the Vedas, was meant to close an epoch of war between the different races inhabiting India, between Devas and Asuras, among the Aryans themselves, between Brahmins and Kshatriyas, between the Kshatriyas themselves, and even among the different Brahmin priests and their followers. It was only natural that an effort should have been made towards lessening the tension existing between different classes of Aryans living in India, and the outcome of this was the Bharata Samhita. In it, moral duties and spiritual happiness received

far greater emphasis than merely the mechanical repetition of Vedic formulæ and Mantras, etc. The main line on which the theme was developed was that non-violence led to great spiritual realisations and that quarrels between step-brothers and cousins and other vices, such as gambling and hunting, caused disappointment, sorrow and unhappiness, and even destruction. The sacrifices in which violence was practised had culminated in quarrels and wars. The moral of the story relating to the performance of the Naga sacrifice is that a sacrifice inspired by hatred and animosity, resulting in the desire for the annihilation of the entire race of the Nagas, should be replaced by pure theistic belief in which there should be no room for such passions, and it was at that sacrifice that the exposition of the Mahabharata took place.

It was not only at that sacrifice, but on many previous occasions, that the Mahabharata or the Bharata Samhita had been recited. The ancient sacrifices had bred insolence amongst kings and quarrels between all classes. The Bharata Samhita pointed out to them a better way of moral and spiritual development and success. The mere instruction imparted to the kings and public at large contained injunctions for divine worship, the true duties of a Brahmin sage and a Kshatriya king, not only by words but also by examples. The kernel of the Bharata Samhita was deeply spiritual. The advice which was given to the sage Veda Vyasa, who was passing through a period of intense sorrow for his separation from his own son Sukadeva, was the essence of the original Bharata Samhita.

Differentiation of functions among the various classes of men had proceeded so far during the period of the sacrifices in India, that the Brahmins alone were invested with the task of saying the prayers, not only for themselves, but for all classes of men who might engage them to expiate their sins and secure prosperity for them by the performance of sacrifices. The sacrifices which the kings held were performed, no doubt, to expiate the sins of the kings. This was a minor reason for undertaking the expensive sacrifices, like Aswamedha, etc. The primary object lay in the desire on the part of the Brahmin Rishis to extend cultural fraternity among kings and Rishis who were invited to be present. With the sanction of the illustrious kings and Rishis present at these sacrifices, the duties enjoined in the Vedas were expounded for inducing the general public to follow them.

They were meant to further the cultural development of all the communities living in Aryavarta on Vedic lines, and to bring into its fold all classes of men; and it was for this that some of the days of the

sacrifice were set apart for the participation of the non-Aryan communities, to whom Vedic instruction was then imparted by the Vedic Rishis. It should be borne in mind that according to the evidence recorded in early literature, the non-Aryans, such as those who lived by hunting and fishing, etc., were not despised, but were sought to be uplifted and civilised by the Brahmins and the sacrifices subserved from this point of view a very important purpose. It is also on record in the Mahabharata that the Nishadas, Shabars, Kiratas and Fishermen were auxiliaries of the Brahmins, who with their help upheld their own cause against hostile kings, such as Vena and Visvamitra.

One of the earliest sacrifices that is mentioned in the Mahabharata was a human sacrifice, performed by King Somaka, who sacrificed his one son Jantu for getting one hundred and one sons as a boon from the gods at the instance of his chief priest. Animals were frequently sacrificed, and this must have raised a revulsion of feeling among many of the Rishis. The priest who had advised King Somaka to perform the child sacrifice was made to pay a penalty for this by being condemned to live in hell. With the awakening of more human feelings, sacrifices were not, however, altogether abolished, but the cruel practices connected with them were considerably minimised, and they were made to serve a higher purpose, namely, the cultural one, of which so much has been written already as to require no further amplification. It was then that an elaborate programme was introduced and all the communities living in the land were addressed on separate days as to what they should or should not do, by means of songs chanted by the Vinaganigas at the order of the Adhvaryu, and through legends.

If we take the history of the performance of sacrifices in historical sequence, according to the version of the Mahabharata and the Purana, it was Manu Vivasvata who first celebrated Yajnas and those who were illustrious among his descendants followed his example. On the first day of the sacrifice, songs (called Gathas) giving accounts of their glorious deeds were sung.

On the second day the story of Yama Vivasvata, who offered King Muchukunda the sovereignty of this world, was told. The story contains the moral that power should be won by one's own exertions and not received as a gift. The lesson of this story was intended for the kings who were present at the sacrifice.

It was in this way and on this line that the original Mahabharata was developed. This is sufficiently indicated in the various legends bearing on sacrifice which are to be found in the Mahabharata. In fact, the Mahabarata begins with the sacrifice performed by King Basuhoma,

the distinguished follower of Indra who was eventually converted into a worshipper of Narayana. It was there that a dispute arose among the priests and the Devas over the question of the expediency of animal or corn sacrifices, and King Basuhoma was cursed by the Rishis for having taken the side of the Devas and decided wrongfully in favour of animal sacrifice. He was freed from the curse when he became a worshipper of Narayana. Some begin the Mahabharata with Manu Vivasvata and some with Basuhoma or Uparichara.

In the Asvamedha sacrifice the horse, which was then considered to be the most valuable possession, was killed in order to propitiate the gods and obtain from them boons in compensation for the loss which the kings had undergone in this manner. The story of King Somaka (Mbh. Bana Parva, Chapter 127) is an illustration of the extent of the grip which this view had on men, and this probably explains the origin of the human sacrifice that prevailed among the Indians at a later period of their history. When the cow came to be regarded as a valuable possession it was sacrificed at the Gomedhah-Yajna with a view to secure the multiplication of wealth and the fulfilment of wishes on the part of the performer. The Rig Veda contains a mystic interpretation of the horse sacrifice in the following lines:

"May not thy breath of life oppress thee when thou goest to the gods; may not the axe injure thy bodies; may not a hasty, unskilled carver, blundering in his work, cleave thy limbs wrongly. Forsooth, thou diest not here, nor dost thou suffer any injury; no, thou goest to the gods along fair, easy paths; the two harits (Indra's) and the dappled deer (the Maruts) will be thy comrades."

It would be erroneous to hold the view that sacrifice was performed in order to release the soul of the animal from its earthly frame. The sacrifice was due to the then superstition of the people that gods are propitiated not by prayers alone but by the sacrifice of a thing which is very dear to man, and it is well worth remembering that ethical conceptions of philanthropy have their origin in the superstitious propitiatory rites of our ancestors. The Mahabharata gives us numerous instances of kings going to heaven as a reward for their performance of sacrifices in this world. Therefore the view entertained by Oldfield Howey in his book "The Horse in Magic and Myth," that "the Aswamedha is altogether travestied in the writings of a much later date known as Purans," cannot be subscribed to. According to him "a mortal rajah performs the sacrifice that he may dethrone the God Indra"—a conception of a much later time. But the Puranas, which give the genealogies of kings who are mentioned even in the Vedas, would not err in assigning the real reasons for which they performed the horse sacrifice, that it was for a definite reward.

The Vedic Mantras, which were uttered at the sacrifices are characteristic of the humanism and spirituality of the Aryan Sages, but they do not negative the assumption that behind the performance of the sacrifice lay a more sordid motive on the part of those who celebrated it at such a cost.

The great cultural value of the performance of Aswamedha and Raja-Suya sacrifices by the king has already been adverted to in the foregoing pages, but in view of the opinion of Mr. Howey in his book it is necessary to go into greater detail with regard to the inner significance of the Yajnas performed by the Ancient Indians, and to clear up the position about their real implications and the connections which existed between the horse and the other great sacrifices performed by the Aryan kings in collaboration with illustrious Rishis, and the origin of Bharata Samhita, which developed into the Mahabharata, the great Epic of the Hindus.

The horse sacrifice is one of the earliest Vedic institutions and was common to many of the ancient peoples of the world. In the Brahmanic narration of the early history of India, the kings who celebrated the horse sacrifice at the instance of the Brahmins, are given greater prominance in the enumeration than those who did not. One can concede the point that there is and will be considerable difficulty, even insuperable, in distinguishing the truly historical from the purely legendary in these lists. The kings who performed the horse sacrifice and attained renown according to the Mahabharata may be reckoned from Yama Vivasvata. Among the morbid rulers who are mentioned in this connection were Harimedhaha, Ranti Deva, Gaya Raja, Sasabindhu, Sagora Nimi, Vaisravana, Nriga, Ajamidha, Rama, Khatvanga Dilip, Navagha, Nahusa, Yayati, Mandhata, Kuru, Sambarana, Ailics, Harsyasva, Sambarta, Rajarshi, Astaka, the king Maruttva, Sivi, Basumanah, Bhisma, etc.

Mr. M. Oldfield Howey, in his interesting book, " The Horse in Magic and Myth " has proved the antiquity and the almost universality among the Eastern nations of representing the ruler of the day as "being drawn in his chariot by celestial horses on his diurnal journey across the skies. Hence horses figure largely in Solar rites, and used to be led in procession before the Sun God's shrine and in many countries were annually sacrificed to Him." This was the custom among the Israelites; Xenophon testifies that horse sacrifices were performed by the Persians and the Armenians. The Ancient Greeks shared these customs. The Rhodians worshipped the Sun, their chief deity, every year by dedicating to him a chariot and four horses, which were cast into the sea for his use.

This is what he says about the horse sacrifice of the Aryans in A·yavarta. The distinctively royal sacrifice of India is the Aswamedha or horse sacrifice. The popularity of the Raja-Suya sacrifice was on the wane and had commenced to be discredited in the Epic Age. It was not therefore well spoken of or supported in the Indian Epics. The Ramayana (Book VII) describes that when Rama Chandra wanted to perform it for the reason that its performance had raised Mitra Suhata to the status of the God Baruna and Soma (Moon) to godhead and to universal fame, Bharata dissuaded him therefrom. Rama had sought the counsel of his brothers Bharata and Lakshmån, who had all been sent for the purpose. Bharata did not approve of Raja-Suya sacrifice. He said that the chivalry of the kings would raise false hopes in their minds, make them try their luck and cause destruction. They were all living peacefully under his yoke and it would not be expedient to disturb it. Rama approved of it and asked Lakshman to speak out his mind. Lakshman thought it would be well if he performed the Aswamedha sacrifice by which Indra had formerly been purged of the sin of murduring a Brahmin Brita, and La'kshmana recited the story of Brita, beginning with the worship of Narayana by the Vedic gods Indra and others. Rama Chandra approved of it and said that there was a king of Balhiks named Kardama whose son Ila was a famous and virtuous king of yore. He was transformed into a woman while out on a hunting expedition to the place where Mahatma was born. He worshipped Siva first and wanted that he be restored to his former manliness, but failed. Then he worshipped Durga of Uma, who granted his prayer with this variation, that he would be male for a month and female for the next by rotation. Then when he was female he fell in love with the son of the Moon (Budha) and gave birth to Pururaba, the progenitor of the great line of kings of India. Harivamsa, the sequel of the Mahabharata (Bhabisya Parva, Chapter II), ascribes the great carnage and destruction of the Kurukshettra war to the Raja-Suya sacrifice of Yudhisthira.

One cannot overlook, in this connection, one very important fact, that the discourse between the chief combatants on the eve of the great war contained a comparision of the principal actors of the war and their implements, with the various rituals and ceremonies of an Aswamedha sacrifice. As the functions and ceremonies connected with Yajna are completely described in these verses, the comparison is reproduced from the Mahabharata. The speech is put in the mouth of Karna, who thus speaks to Krishna :—

"O Krishna in the great impending war sacrifice, you will play the part of the Adhwaryu in which capacity you will supervise the performance of the sacrifice, and Vibhatsu, whose banner displays the figure of a monkey, will assume the role of a Hotri or the Priest who will pour offerings in the flames of the fire of War."

"The Gandiva bow will be the sacrificial ladle and the might of men will constitute the clarified butter to be poured as libation on the fire. The weapons Aindra, Pashupata, Brahma, and Sthunakarna, O Madhava, used by Savyasachi (Arjuna) will be the incantations (Mantras) in the sacrifice." "Equal to his father or even superior to him in prowess the son of Subhadra will be the Vedic hymn recited there. The repeater (Udgatri) of those incantations again will be Bhima, who will also be the Parastori (the preparer), that foremost of men, that destroyer of the elephants in the army, making loud roars in battle. The Virtuous souled king Yudhisthira, engaged in making Yapa and Homa, will perform the office of a Brahmana in the sacrificial rite. The sounds of conch shells, of tabors and drums and the roars of lions will announce the hour of dinner in that sacrifice. Nakula and Shahadeva, the two sons of Madri endowed with fame, these two heroes of great strength will be duly the sacrificers of animals in that sacrifice. Furnished with flagstaffs of various colours, spotless rows of carriage, O Govinda, will be the Yupas (staff for fastening sacrificial animals) in this sacrifice, at the end of the principal ceremony, O Janardana. Karnin (arrows with barbs), Malikas (a rude sort of musket), Narachas (daggers fastened to sticks) and arrows like the teeth of calves and Tamaras will be the spoons and vessels for the Soma juice; while bows will be substitutes for Pavitras (Khsha leaves for sprinkling clarified butter). The swords will be substitutes for the Kapalas and the heads of soldiers killed in the field will be those for Purodashas; the blood of warriors will be the clarified butter, O Krishna, in that sacrificial ceremony. The lances will be the substitutes for Paridhas (vessels for depositing the offerings) and the maces will be those for Saktis (the wood-work for protecting the offerings), the part of assisting priests will be performed by the disciples of Drona and Kripa and Saradwata. The arrows, let loose by the wielder of the Gandiva bow and shot also by car-warriors urged by Drona and his son, will act for ladles in their sacrifice. Satyaki will do the duties of the chief assistant to the head priest; the son of Dhritarastra will be the performer and his large army will take the place of his wife. Ghatatkacha, of great strength, will be the slayer of the sacrificial animals at the commencement of this sacrificial rite at an advanced hour of the night, O you of long arms. The Dakshina (final gifts to the priest) of that sacrifice will be Dhristadyumna of great energy, for, O Krishna, he was born out of fire in a sacrifice having for its mouth the rites celebrated with Mantras.*"

The love story of Aila Pururaba and Urbasi received the distinct name of Aila Gita in the famous book Srimad Bhagavata (11th Skanda, Chapter XXVI). The Mahabharata made a mess of this story and in one place foisted it upon king Pratipa and in another upon Bhagiratha. (Adi Parva, Chapter XCVII, Bana Parva, Chapter CCV, verses 25—28 and Shanti Parva, Chapter XCVII). It was Ganga who passed by the name of Urbasi. This is the all important fact that can be inferred from all these contradictory versions. The river Ganga had three courses which were the works of three kings, *viz.*, Pururaba, Bhagiratha and Pratipa, all celebrated for performing sacrifices and making rich presents to Brahmin sages. Kapila first drew the attention of king Sagara to the fact that public good could be achieved not by the performance of Vedic sacrifices only, but by excavating rivers and canals to provide facilities of transport, trade and agricul-

*The Mbh, Udyoga Parva, Chapter CXLI, verses 30—44.

ture and drinking water for men and cattle. It was this that was meant by the story of his detaining the sacrificial horse of the Asvamedha sacrifice and destroying Sagara's sons by a curse as the water of the sea they had dug in was unfit for drinking. Kapila, the great philosopher and sage of the Vedic age, was the son of Kardama by Debahuti.

It was Indra who had kept the horse of king Sagar at the hermitage of Kapila at the estuary of the Ganges with the sea. It was Ansuman, grandson of Sagar, who rescued the horse after propitiating Kapila, who advised him to bring the Ganges there in order that the sons of Sagara might be absolved from the curse. Kapila's disciples followed him and stood against the Vedic practices, and it was for this reason that the Ganges, the most celebrated of the sacred rivers of India, was mentioned in the Rig Veda but once. This is misunderstood and misconstrued by Western scholars. King Sagara was a very strict ruler and exiled his son Asamanjas for his cruelties to the subjects. Kardama's son was Illa, who was a brother of Ikshaku. There seems to be a connection between Kapila and Sagar. It was Bhagiratha who succeeded in bringing the good drinking water of the Ganges to his hermitage and was blessed. The royal sage Jahnu obstructed it and was won over to let it pass, for which his name became connected with the river (as Jahnabi).

In those days the great benefactors' memories were kept alive in the names of the rivers they excavated. The excavation of a river was often connected with a sacrifice. The sages who congregated at the sacrifices wanted rivers near their abodes and rivers were invoked at the time of worship and became sacred. In every worship the names of the seven rivers only, Ganges, Jumna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, Kaveri are mentioned and not the five rivers of the Punjab. This gives a clue to the important fact as to where the ancient Aryan worship of gods took place in India. The hymn-makers of the Vedas give a clue to the names of the authors and the gods they worshipped. Gotra Pravara gives a clue to the educational institutions and their preceptors.

The story of successes is as instructive as that of failures. There is a marked difference between the records of the Hindus and those of the other nations of the world. Stone inscriptions and writings on papyri were recorded to commemorate passing events, but such was not the case with the Hindus in the earliest Vedic times. Sincere and natural expressions of the simple thirst for knowledge, comfort and sympathy were recorded in the hymns. They were engrained in the hearts of the people by frequent repetitions as family or Gotra

traditions. The oldest Chinese records and the inscriptions of Assyria and Babylon do not shed so much light as do the Vedic hymns and gathas, explained and developed in the Brahmanas, Sutras and the Epics of Ancient India, on the early stages of Indo-Aryan civilisation and education. There was no bar to the making of hymns on the divine order of Saints; the kings of the Solar and Lunar dynasties had as much hand in it as the plebians and the patricians of the day.

The catholicity of the early Hindu religion was reflected in this whole-hearted co-ordination of the whole body of able men of the day to resuscitate the true spirit of the immaculate Hindu religion, to find out truth and to convert the whole body of men into one united nation of one thought, one social bond and one religion. This must have produced war and strife between the literate and the illiterate, and the victory was not always with the literate. The victorious held the land and the defeated retired, which was responsible for world civilisation perhaps. The literate found no difficulty in regaining their lost ground with renewed energy and united strength. The combatants were described as the Devas and Danavas or demons, who were sons of the same father but of different mothers only, and did not belong to different countries or regions.

The places where the Vedic sages and kings lived and fought are not hard to trace. They have become the Holy land, and the origin of the name of their country Bharatabarsha is not due to the rule of celebrated kings like Bharata, brother of the hero of the Ramayana, or the son of Sakuntala, the heroine of the famous drama of Kalidasa, but to the son of the Rajarshi Rishava, founder of the Jain religion in India, whose name was also Bharata. Vivasvata Manu of the two Indian Epics performed the sacrifice of Mitra Varuna, but owing to some mistake in place of a son, a daughter Illa, was born. It is also said that he became a girl by the influence of a place where Kartic, son of Siva, was born and was converted into man by the boon of Vishnu, which characterises the fight between the two cults Illabarta was also another name of India, according to the name of Illa. No woman sat on the throne of Ancient India. Those who lived in the Holy land of Aryabarta were called the Aryans and those who were outside it were known as non-Aryans. There was no mention of Aryans invading non-Aryans from the West, passing through the Punjab, in the early Vedic days, as Western scholars want to make out. Manu defined "Aryabartya" clearly and the races of heroes of the several places as well.

In Indian mythological traditions there is no mention of Aryans coming to India from outside and defeating the aborigines. In the

Asoka 13th Rock Edict there is reference to Antiochus II Theos, King of Syria 261—246 B. C. (perhaps Yona King Antiyoka), Turamaya (Ptolemaios II of Egypt), Autikina (Antigonous Gonaties of Macedonia) Maka (Mugus of Cyrene) and Alika Sudan (Alexander of Epirus) as living. It proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that there is no mention of their having ever ruled in India. It is well-known than Alexander's failure to gain a firm footing in India made him so dispirited that he gave himself up to drinking and sacrificed his life, before returning home. Attempts have been made to fix the date of the great Kurukshettra battle through the help of astronomy, but there is hardly any data to work out the time of the fight between the Devas and Danavas or that of the composition of the Bharata Samhita. The religious and spiritual talisman of a Gotra was a special feature in India. The preceptors of the worshippers were first worshipped and this practice is followed even now.

• The five gods: Ganesh, Surjye (the Sun), Durga, Siva and Vishnu are still worshipped by the Hindus before the worshipper makes obeisance and offerings to his own special god. There is distinct mention of places celebrated as the distinct headquarters of the different cults. Sribatsa and Srikantha are two of the places mentioned in the Epics. Professor Rapson in his "Ancient India" and the poet Bana in "Harsacharita," have identified them with Allahabad and Delhi, respectively. The division of the kingdom of India amongst the sons of Rama and those of his brothers is mentioned in the Uttarakanda Ramayana (Book VII, Canto 120, etc.). The king of Kekaya Judhajit sent his priest Gargya, a descendant of Angira, with presents to Rama with a request that the kingdom of Gandharvas should be conquered by him. Rama complied with that request and sent Bharata and his two sons, Taksha and Puskala, to conquer the region. They did so and the name of Takshashila (Taxila) owed its origin to that prince Taksha, who reigned there. (Ramayana Book VII, Canto 114). This shows the expansion of the Indian kingdom. The eldest son of Illa, Sasabindu, extended his dominion upto Persia, in Balhika country, and founded the kingdom whose capital was at Pratisthan (Book VII, Canto 103), Allahabad. Ayodhya owes its name to king Ayu, father of the famous king Nahusa, who was said to have usurped the throne of Indra. It was the capital of the kings of the Ikshaku dynasty. Here the first institution of education seems to have been established and the name of Ayodha Dhaumya (Dhaumya of Ayodha) has perhaps some reference to it. The name of the preceptor in Pousya Parva, was Dhaumya, and the annotator Nilkantha explained the adjective Ayodha

as meaning harsh speaker or having teeth of iron. It does not form part of a name but of the place Ayodha.

The Uttarakanda Ramayana says that Ayodha, after Rama's translation to heaven, was converted into a forest, and it was at the time of king Rishava that it was restored to its former glory (Book VII, Canto 124). Nor is this all. There is distinct mention of a curse upon Urbas for Mitra and Baruna being born as Basistha and Agasthya. The founding of the kingdom of Pratisthan is referred to in Book VII, Cantos 66-67 and 114. The eldest son of Illa, Sasabindhu, reigned in Balhika region and Pururaba reigned in the kingdom of Pratisthan, where the cursed Urbasi met the king Pururaba. The king Nimi, son of Ikshaku, who reigned in the kingdom of Vaijayanti*, was the founder of the kings of Mithila and to him the name of the sacred place of Naimisharanya owed its origin from the performance of sacrifices extending over many years. He asked his priest Vasistha to perform the sacrifices, but the latter requested him to wait till his return after finishing the sacrifice of Indra, for which he had been previously engaged. Nimi did not do so and engaged the services of Bhrigu, Attri and Angira. Vasistha found out what had happened on his return and cursed Nimi that he would lose consciousness, but Nimi did not spare his priest and cursed him too with a similar fate. All these are recited in Ramayana Book VII, from Canto 65 onward.

The story of king Soudasa's performance of the Asvamedha sacrifice, and Vasistha's cursing him for giving him human flesh in that sacrifice, being misled by the appearance of a Pseudo Vasistha described in the Uttarakanda Book VII, Canto 78, has been distorted into the story of the killing of Vasistha's son Sakti in the Mahabharata. This Canto gives the origin of the name Kalmaspada for throwing away the water which he had taken for pronouncing a counter-curse against Vasistha when the priest had cursed the king. This proves the difference between the time of king Nimi and king Soudasa. The priests were revered and were exempt from punishment if they were found wanting in discretion. The legends often display a conflict of the power of the gods and of the sages, and give rise to riddles as to which would prevail. An alleged curse of Vasistha transforming the divine Basu into Bhisma was made a peg on which to hang the fictitious legend of the birth of Bhisma.

*The modern Banavasi in the N. Kanara District of the Bombay Presidency. It was the capital of the South-Western Provinces of the Andhra Empire. It was afterwards held by the Chutu family of Catakarnis and from them it passed to the Kadambas. (Professor Rapson's "Ancient India," page 175, para. 16).

It is said that the pious king Mahavisa of the Ikshaku race went to Heaven and was found wanting in manners when he cast glances at the body of Ganga, displayed by force of the wind. It may be a question of killing two birds with one stone, but in majestic Epic literature such a thing is rather out of place. He was cursed for this and was re-born; Santanu was Mahavisa in a previous life. His father Pratip and his mother were practising religious austerities for a son and they were blessed with one. It is quite inconceivable how Ganga fell in love with Pratip, but the king told her that she would be his daughter-in-law. The important question of the age of bride and bridegroom arises in this statement, for Santanu was not born then. In the table of contents of the Pouranic Mahabharata there is a mention of Vasistha's curse and Basu was transformed into Bhisma (67 Chapter, Adi Parva). Consequently the fearful son of Santanu belongs to the Epic when it assumed the form of a romance and not history.

The idea of purification is not connected with all the streams of India but with certain ones whose names even now are uttered to sanctify the water used in worship. Such is the homage paid to the sacred rivers of India that Bhisma is said to have been born from Ganga or Ganges, the most sacred of all rivers, whom Siva keeps on the lock of his head and which flows from the snowy ranges of the Himalayas. Durga or Uma and Ganga or Ganges, the two daughters of the king of the Himalayas, were the wives of Siva. The incident of Ganges coming down to earth as the wife of Santanu for a trifling cause, and the birth of Bhisma, are therefore very hard to take as historical facts. Bhisma is the creation of the Epic as Daimon in Grecian Epic. Professor Max Muller speaks of it as one of

"The three important roads leading to the discovery of something Divine in Man. We have thus discovered three roads on which the Greeks were conducted to the discovery of something more than human, something superhuman, something divine or infinite in man. The most important road was that of ancestor worship, beginning with the honours paid to departed parents, grand-parents, and great-grand-parents, then leading on to the worship of the ancestors of a family, of a clan, of a town, and of a state, and ending in the recognition of a world of spirits, not far removed from the world of the Gods.

"The second road started from a kind of mythological belief in human heroes, as the offspring of Zeus. Afterwards ordinary mortals also were raised to the same level, and thus another approach was made to the discovery of something divine, or, at least, God-like in man. The third road started from a belief in divine powers, called Daimones. These spirits were supposed to watch over the destiny of a man, then to become his destiny. A man being possessed by his daimon was at last identified with it, and the divine in man was thus once more recognised as the daimon, of Socrates and other philosophers. Nearness, likeness, and oneness with the Divine are the three goals which the human mind reached in Greece. In each case we see

that a belief in nature-gods is pre-supposed, nay that without that belief anthropological religion would be simply impossible."

In the Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Chapter 284, one finds the origin of Kali from Durga.

"Virabhadra said :—'I am neither Rudra nor his consort the goddess Uma. Nor have I come here for partaking of the food. Knowing the fact of Uma's anger, the powerful Lord who is the soul of all creatures has yielded to anger. I have not come here for seeing these foremost of Brahmana. I have not come here impelled by curiosity. Know that I have come here or destroying this sacrifice of yours. I am known by the name of Virabhadra and I have originated from the anger of Rudra. This lady who is called Bhadrakali, has originated from the anger of the goddess. We have both been sent by that god of gods, and we have accordingly come here. O foremost of Brahmanas, seek the protection of that Lord of the gods, the consort of Uma! It is better to incur even the anger of that foremost of gods than to obtain boons from any other god.' Hearing the words of Virabhadra, Daksha, that foremost of all pious men, bowed down unto Maheshwara and sought to please him by uttering the following hymn*".

This is in connection with the predominence of Narayana cult over the Pasupat cult. Its discourse bearing upon the subject is to be found in the subsequent Chapter 350, where Siva is described as Trayambaka. Durga is not a pouranic goddess as there are hymns in the Vedas (Rig Veda, Max Muller's translation Vol. vi, p. 83) where she is invoked to overcome obstacles in war as the following quotation shows :

"All who are bewildered in obstacles, in misfortune, in fearful war, in trouble from enemies, in visitations from fire or thieves, in escape from evil stars, in troublesome obstacles, in wars and wildernesses, approach thee. Give us security from these, give us security from these.. Om, adoration! .... May Durga, the goddess (Devih), be propitious for our success †".

The authors of the Epics and their family were connected with Siva and Durga worship. Quotations of the Mahabharata will speak for themselves:—

"Then the illustrious Valmiki, addressing Yudhisthira, said,—Once upon a time, in course of a disputation, certain ascetics who possessed the Homa-fire condemned me as one guilty of Brahmanicide. As soon as they had condemned me as such, the sin of Brahmanicide, O Bharata, possessed me. I then, for purifying myself, sought the protection of the sinless Ishana, who is irresistible in energy. I became purged of all my sins. That remover of all sorrows, viz., the destroyer of the triple city of the Asuras, said to me,—You will acquire great fame in the world. .... Parashara said;—Formerly I pleased Sarva, O king. I then cherished the desire of getting a son who would be endued with great ascetic merit, and superior energy, and addressed to high Yoga, that would acquire world-wide fame, arrange the Vedas and become the home of prosperity, that would be devoted to the Vedas and the Brahmanas, and be famous for mercy. Such a son was desired by me from Maheshwara. Knowing that this was the wish of my heart,

* Professor M. N. Dutt's English Translation of the Mbh. Shanti Parva, Chapter CCLXXXIV, pp. 433, Slokas 49-53.

† Professor Max Muller's "Collected Works" pp. 411-412.

that foremost of gods said to me,—Through the fruition of that object of yours which you wish to get from me, you will have a son named Krishna. In that creation which shall be known after the name of Savarni-Manu, that son of yours shall be reckoned among the seven Rishis. He shall arrange the Vedas, and be the propagator of Kuru's race. He shall, besides be the author of the ancient histories and do behoof to the world. Gifted with severe penances he shall, again, be the dear friend of Shakra. Freed from all sorts of diseases, that son of yours, O Parashara, shall, besides be immortal.*

"The great ascetic Ushanas, crowned with Yoga success, entered the person of Kuvera, and depriving the lord of wealth of his liberty by means of Yoga, robbed him of all his riches. Seeing his riches taken away from him, the lord of wealth became highly displeased. Filled with anxiety, and his anger also being worked up, he went to that foremost of gods, *viz.*, Mahadeva. Kuvera reported the matter to Shiva of great energy that first of gods, fierce and amiable, and endued with various forms. Shiva said :- Ushanas, having spiritualised himself by Yoga, entered my body and depriving myself of liberty, has taken away all my riches. Having by Yoga entered my body he has again left it. Hearing these words, Maheswara of Supreme Yoga-powers became filled with ire. His eyes, O king, became blood red, and taking up his lance he waited. .... When the fierce-armed and powerful Mahadeva of great energy had thus bent his lance that weapon came to be called from that time by the name of Pinaka. The lord of Uma, seeing Bhargava thus brought upon the palm of his hand, opened his mouth The chief of the gods then threw Bhargava into his mouth and swallowed him up. The powerful and great Ushanas of Bhrigu's race, entering the stomach of Maheshwara, began to wander there. .... At last he found the outlet and came out through it. On account of this incident he passed by the name of Shukra, and it is for this he also became unable to attain the central point of the sky. Seeing him come out of his stomach and shining brightly with energy, Bhava, filled with anger, stood with lance uplifted in his hand. The goddess Uma then interposed and forbade the angry lord of all creatures, *viz.*, her consort, to kill the Brahmana. And on account of Uma's having thus prevented her lord from fulfilling his purpose, the ascetic Ushanas became the son of the goddess. The goddess said :—This Brahmana no longer deserves to be killed by you. He has become my son O god, one who comes out of your stomach does not deserve to be killed by you. Bhisma said :—Pacified by these words of his wife, Bhava smiled and said repeatedly these words, O king, *viz*,—Let this one go wherever he likes. Bowing to the boon-giving Mahadeva and also to his wife the goddess Uma, the great ascetic Ushanas, gifted with superior intelligence, proceeded to the place he chose †"

The Uttarakanda Ramayana speaks of the fight between the brothers Kubera and Ravana and the defeat of Kubera, which is implied in the foregoing quotation of the Mahabharata Bhargava affair. There is very clear mention of the sages' spiritual success through their hymns on Vishnu in the Rig Veda, and the Mahabharata was made out of the same Veda.

"Ushanas became Shukra by having pleased the god of gods. Indeed, by singing the praises of the goddess (Uma) he sports in the sky, in great effulgence. Then, again, Asita and Devala, and Narada and Parvata, and Kakshivat, and Jamadagni's son Rama, and Tandya possessed of purified soul, and Vashistha, and

* Mbh. Anushasana Parva, Chapter XVIII, pp. 60-61, Slokas 8—10 and 41—45.

† Mbh. Shanti Parva, Chapter CCXC, pp. 448-449, slokas 9—13, 18—20 and 32—37.

Jamadagni, and Vishwamitra, and Atri, and Bharadwaja, and Harishmashru and Kundadhara, and Shrutashravas,—these great sages, by worshipping Vishnu with concentrated minds with the help of Rishis, and by penances, acquired success through the grace of that great god gifted with intelligence "*

The aim and object of the Durga Hymn in the Rig Veda and the Mahabharata seem to be almost identical. What is more, the autumn worship of Durga, it is said, was undertaken by Rama to kill Ravana. It is recited in the avowal of the purpose of the autumn worship, called Saradiya Pujah, even now by every performer in the Sankalpa or the preliminary object of worship, which bears out the strong tradition so very current and believed to be true by the general Hindu public. The worship of Durga begins at night and the immersion ceremony—the last rite—takes place at night, and it was for this reason the Durga hymn is called night hymn. Taittriya Aranyaka of Vyasa and Mahanarayan Upanishad contain many invocations and verses on Durga. The word Trayambaka is derived from Stri (wife) Ambika (Satapatha Brahmana II, 6, 2, 9). In Taittiriya Brahmana Ambika is called Sarada and from the name Saradiya Puja (worship) came into vogue. All these prove the importance of Durga worship and its antiquity. In the Bhisma Parva, Durga is not only the representative of Brahma-Vidya but Mahamaya herself, who discovers the real Brahma behind the veil of Maya or illusion. The famous incantation (Mantra) of Mahamritunjoya begins with the Trayambaka invocation, so much in vogue to overcome death and disease even now all over the Hindu world.

Sri Krishna advised Arjuna to fight Bhisma in one chapter and in the next, at his instance, Arjuna worshipped Durga and received her blessing to win the difficult battle of Kurukshettra.

"The Goddess said:—O son of Pandu, you will vanquish your enemy in no time. O invincible one, you have Narayana himself to help you. You are incapable of being defeated by any foe, not even by the wielder of thunderbolt (Indra). Sanjaya said:—Having said this, that boon-giving goddess disappeared.†"

How again he was capable of being attacked with such a weakness as was represented in the Gita immediately after this boon of Durga is quite inconcievable. Western scholars ascribe Pouranic origin to Durga and some scholars like Professors Weber and Moor have tried to show that the Pouranic Durga was nothing but a continuation of Vedic Kali, in which Professor Max Muller thinks there is some truth ("*vide* pp. 163 of his book "Collected Works") and he in his appendix to this book has given the hymn on Durga from one of the Khilas of the

* Mbh. Shanti Parva, Chapter CCXCIII, pp. 452, Slokas 14-15.

† The Mahabharata (M N. Dutta) Bhishma Parva, Chapter XXIII, p. 30, Verses 18-19,

Rig Veda. Besides, he mentioned "Several of the names given to Rudra in the Taittiriya Aranyaka, points to him as the husband of Durga." It has been shown that Vyasa is the author of Taittiriya Aranyaka and the Mahabharata, consequently the mention of the goddess Durga cannot belong to a later age ; but this much is certain that the worship of Krishna and the Gita literature belong to a later age and Vyasa, the author of Brahma Sutra or of Yajurveda cannot be the author of the Gita, for obvious reasons of extolling Samkhya Philosophy and Sama Veda. The names of the wives of Bichittrabirjya are Ambika and Ambalika, the daughters of the king of Benares, the centre of Sakti worship, and these are the names of Durga. The prayer to Durga by Arjuna before the battle and by Yudhisthira before entering the kingdom Virata are significant facts in the history of religion.

In Vedic India fathers became companions of the Devas and laid the foundation of ancestor worship. The idea of one soul and his kinship to the Creator are the roots of ancestor worship. Herbert Spencer's definition of ancestor worship, as explained by Professor Max Muller, is of very great interest to the Epic theory of the growth of religion and narration.

" The remarkable man may be the founder of the tribe; he may be a chief famed for strength and bravery; he may be a medicine-man of great repute; he may be an inventor of something new; and then, instead of being a member of the tribe, he may be a superior stranger bringing arts and knowledge or he may be one of a superior race gaining pre-dominance by conquest. Being at first one or other of those, regarded with awe during his life, he is regarded with increased awe after his death; and the propitiation of ghosts which are less feared, develops into an established worship. There is no exception then. Using the phrase ancestor worship in its broadest sense as comprehending all worship of the dead, be they of the same blood or not, we conclude that ancestor-worship is the root of every religion.

Ancestor-worship pre-supposes a belief in Gods.

" That ancestor worship is more fertile in religious thought than fetishism or totemism, will be denied by no one who is acquainted with any of the ancient religions of the world, with those of Rome and Greece, and, more especially, of India. But any scholar acquainted with the literature of these countries, knows at the same time how in every one of these religions ancestor-worship pre-supposes nature-worship, or, more correctly, a worship of the gods of nature.

"We constantly hear that the Departed, the Fathers, the Ancestors, the Heroes are admitted to the society of the gods, they are often called half-gods, they may at times claim even a certain equality with the gods. But the gods are always there before them, and even when their individual names are forgotten, there is the general concept of deity to which the ancestral spirits aspire.

"Thus we read in the golden words ascribed to Pythagoras, whoever their author may have been:

'First to the immortal gods pay reverence due,
Honour thy oath, and give the Heroes praise,
And those beneath the earth by actions just;
Reverence thy parents, and thy nearest kin:
And count him friend whose virtue brightest shines,
To gentle words incline and useful deeds :

"Again, when Plato speaks of the divine powers that ought to be reverenced by obeying their laws and wishes, he says (Laws, xi, 927) :

'But if these things are really so, in the first place men should have a fear of the gods above, who regard the loneliness of orphans; and in the second place of the souls of the departed, who by nature incline to take an especial care of their own children; and they are friendly to those who honour them, and unfriendly to those who do not.'*"

Professor Max Muller says:—"In the same manner then in which, out of the bright powers of nature, the Devas or Gods had arisen, there arose out of predicates shared in common by the departed, such as Pritris, fathers, preta, gone away, another general concept, what we should call Manes, the kind ones, Ancestors, Shades, Spirits or Ghosts, whose worship was nowhere more fully developed than in India. That common name, Pitris or Fathers, gradually attracted towards itself all that the fathers shared in common. It came to mean not only fathers, but invisible, kind, powerful, immortal, heavenly beings, and we can watch in the Veda, better perhaps than anywhere else, the inevitable, yet most touching, metamorphosis of ancient thought,—the love of the child for father and mother becoming transfigured into an instinctive belief in the immortality of the soul. It is strange, and really more than strange, that not only should this important and prominent side of the ancient religion of the Hindus have been ignored, but that of late its very existence should have been doubted.†

Plato on Gods, Daimones, Heroes, and Ancestral Spirits.

"We cannot find a better summing up of the last results of Greek religion than what is given us by Plato. 'First', he says (Laws, 716 seq.), 'comes a belief in God, in that God, who, as the old tradition declares, holds in His hand the beginning, middle, and end of all that is and moves according to His nature in a straight line (rite) towards the accomplishment of His end. Justice always follows Him, and is the punisher of those who fall short of the divine law. Every man therefore ought to make up his mind that he will be one of the followers of God—and he who would be dear to God, must, as far as possible, be like Him and such as He is.'

"Now this may seem a very philosophical religion, but this belief in God, quite apart from a belief in the many Olympian gods, can be discovered in Homer quite as much as in Plato. In the Iliad, ix, 49, Diomedes says, (Lectures on the Science of Language, ii, 460): 'Let all flee home, but we two, I and Sthenelos, will fight till we see the end of Troy : for we come with God.'

"In the Odyssey (xiv. 444; x.306), the swineherd says to Ulysses : 'Eat and enjoy what is here, for God will grant one thing, but another He will refuse, whatever He will in His mind, for He can do all things!'

* Professor Max Muller's "Collected Works" pp. 127-129

† Professor Max Muller's "India, What Can it Teach Us." Lecture VII, p. 220.

"And Plato himself, after he has thus spoken of God, continues 'This is the conclusion, which is also the noblest and truest of all sayings, that for the good man to offer sacrifices to the Gods, and hold converse with them by means of prayers and offerings and every kind of service, is the noblest and best of all things, and also the most conducive to a happy life, and very fit and meet.'

"He then continues: 'Next after the Olympian gods, and the gods of the State, honour should be given to the gods below. Next to these gods a wise man will do service to the daimones or spirits, and then to the heroes, and after them will follow the sacred places of private and ancestral gods having their ritual according to Law. Next comes the honour of living parents, to whom, as is meet, we have to pay the first and greatest and oldest of all debts. And all his life long a man ought never to utter an unbecoming word to them; for of all light and winged words he will have to give an account; Nemesis, the messenger of Justice, is appointed to watch over them. When they are angry and want to satisfy their feelings in word or deed, he should not resist them; for a father who thinks that he has been wronged by his son may be reasonably expected to be very angry. At their death, the most moderate funeral is best. And let a man not forget to pay the yearly tribute of respect to the dead, honouring them chiefly by omitting nothing that conduces to a perpetual remembrance of them, and giving a reasonable portion of his fortune to the dead.'

"Whatever in this account of Greek religion in its widest sense may be ascribed to Plato personally, one thing seems very clear, that at his time a belief in the Olympian gods, and a belief in the spirits of the departed, existed peaceably side by side, and that funeral ceremonies, and a continued commemoration of the dead were considered essential elements of a truly religious life, quite as much as the sacrifices and praises of the great gods of nature.*"

The Aryan mind was not only occupied with the problems of the present world, but with a rare devotion turned to the solution of those of the past and their original cause, and the problem of future existence. It is true that the compendious literature of the Aryan is not free from indications of the primitive mind struggling for enlightenment in an atmosphere of coarse superstition, as we find in the Atharva Veda, but the speculative mind of the Aryans soon leaves far behind the simple mentality of an early age and plunges into the unfathomable mysteries of this world and beyond and discovers truths which enable men to walk in the path of righteousness in this world with a sure grasp of its realities. In India only, people learnt by centuries of meditation, sacrifices, and from the teachings of a galaxy of sacred seers and hoary-headed patriarchs. If a proper valuation of the Aryan culture of India is made, one has no doubt that it will be considered unique. In India, religion was not of a very simple kind, and in its final analysis is found to be the milk of nature developed into the bread problem of life only. Nowhere in the world did

*Professor Max Muller's "Collected Works", pp. 364—366.

religion and metaphysical ideas strike such deep root as in Ancient India, where even women like Sulava, Maitreye and Sandili, not only preached sublime doctrines but learned to be indifferent to pleasure and pain and made no difference between life and death, while some chose death with a view to release them from the bond which prevented them from merging their own Self (Atman) in the eternal Self (Paramatman).

It is not the idol the symbol of life in the dead statue of a great god or divine saint, which a nation worships. It is not a question of speaking to them through the power of the will and faith of the priest or follower, like the Oracle of Delphi. The propounders or followers of every religion cry that the voice of God or His Prophet calls everyman to follow His religion, so that one may be delivered of his sins and relieved of his sighs and sorrows. It is nothing but absolute knowledge to overcome sorrow and pain and to crown success in the world below, and above in the after life, that the Indian Epics are designated as religious books of real history of the success of an Ancient Hindu nation, distinguished with the name Aryan or Arya. They saw the presence of the Creator in the skill of Nature, in day and night, in the Sun and in the Moon and in the Stars appearing in bright effulgence and disappearing in the process of time, or with the freaks of Nature—cloud, lighting, thunder and storm—in the vast limitless ocean bellowing forth in contrast with the quiet sparkling pool with fragrant lillies full of humming bees, in the trembling evergreen blades of grass, at the feet of the glow-worm or butterfly, in trees bending with fruits and flowers, sometimes very beautiful, sometimes barren—harmony with the laws of Nature and Season. The play of heart and the work of brain, how they are co-related with the so-called dead Nature around, in the sphere of knowledge and observance, are all manifest in the Creation, to give strength and courage to do one's duty here below.

The ordinary events and appearances of Nature cannot arouse or gratify curiosity or admiration. Therefore that powerful propensity of human nature towards the new and surprising, animated by its delight, was eagerly laid hold of by the legislators, poets, philosophers, priests and kings. The personification of virtue, vice, religion and moral affection soon became the order of the day. The theory of the divine nature, diffused through the human soul and comprehended in it, the principles and elements of all truth, human and divine, were established. They proceed to show by examples that celestial flame could not be generaed be the flames of sacrifices or study but by such acts as might

tend to exhaust and attenuate the body in silence and solitude by the practice of certain discovered hidden words to produce its latent virtue, to instruct man in the knowledge of divine things.

Vyasa and Valmiki, it must be understood, wrote the Epics under such conditions and not under the school of present-day Western thought, which guides Western scholars to criticise the books of the Hindus and earn fame and lucrative berths in the universities. If any mischief was done it was by the later editors, who revised or reconstructed the Epics. As regards the worship of gods according to the Epic, there is a pure and very strict moral and spiritual life which was pleasing to them and gained their favour; it was not a question of any cult or dogma. Religious toleration is as necessary for the unity and growth of any nation as spiritual, moral or bodily exercise. The rules of private life at different stages were made, and lessons on them formed the essential parts of the Epic. The forms of outward worship were not then so very necessary as the growth of the belief in the gods in the mass was found imperative. Religious feelings could not be re-kindled by forms which could not be understood.

The days of myths and mythism were gone. The gods were divided into the divinities of Heaven, Earth, Sea and Patala in order of precedence. Pious, moral, dutiful men go to Heaven, the wise men rule the Earth, adventurous resourceful men rule the Ocean, and the vain and presumptuous go down to Patala, *i.e.*, different from earth. Eventually everything with the mass became more a matter of state, religion and custom than anything else. Many old cults and customs were changed by conquest. Shrines and illustrious men became the centre of mob attraction. It was thus that the gods and their great prophets, as their incarnations, were worshipped. The manifold protecting gods for different events of life in times of trouble were invoked. Indian religion thus became an affair of the state, when responsible men were employed by the king himself to write the book of religion and, when it was approved of by the public assembly at the Royal sacrifice, the author was rewarded. It was for this reason that the name of the book was connected with the name of the king and not the family of kings, as the Bharata Samhita with the king Bharata, the Ramayana with Rama.

But the name Mahabharata is given to the enlarged Epic of the greater and growing Bharata people, with the ideals of a national Epic of very great importance which contains all that is worth knowing of India as a whole continent at different stages and not of any province or kingdom at all or of one time. The question of the historical process of chronology was never thought of as being possible or necessary in a work

of this sort. To assuage the sorrow of the afflicted heart and realise the essence of religion and duty in the sphere of human work in the earth below were the aims of the Epic. Virtue will have its reward, though vice may rise for a time to be uprooted fully with growth so that it may not grow again. The demons belong to a later age than gods and men, and the introduction of foreign deities is mentioned in Greece.*

In Epic literature hero-worship is prominent. There is an unique advantage in being a ruler; one can do more good than an ordinary man. The desire for reputation owes its birth to a virtuous instinct. A good reputation is a kind of second inheritance. Courage and knowledge go together in the making of greatness. Mere knowledge without courage and ability is a barren possession. It is a great and noble task for a king to rule justly, for men are not the masters of their impulses,—materialists think with their eyes and idealists see with their heads and mind. The neglected education of its youth is the ruin of a nation. The fruits of honest labour are honour, profit and enjoyment. Liberty consists of doing what is right and lawful and not what one likes. It is for this that good kings were worshipped and praised, being regarded as the divine dispensers of good, and tyrants were killed by heroes who were loved and honoured by suffering humanity. Filial and fraternal love and piety as well as chastity and constancy were loved and worshipped and rewarded by kings. Scholarship and skill made men famous. A stout heart overcomes bad fortune and the heart of the soul is trust in God. Love and faith are seen in deeds. Repaying injury with kindness is the way that prudent men act. Love makes all positions equal. The heart is the root of faith and love. Goodness never dies. Desire makes beautiful what is actually ugly and detestable. Passion loves the body but true love exults the soul. A wise man does not fight against fate. Courtesy is the subtle fascination that a great man employs. When all these good qualities and greatness were found in a man he was worshipped as a God alone. This was the epoch-

* "From the earliest times we find deities worshipped in one place, who were not known in another. But some of these, as Dionysus and Pan became common property in course of time; and, the more lasting and more extensive the intercourse became with other peoples, more especially in the colonies, the introduction of foreign deities became greater. Some of these were identified with the gods already worshipped, while others preserved their original attributes subject, of course, to modifications, to suit the spirit of the Greeks. This aptitude for naturalising foreign religions declined more and more as Gerece ceased to flourish. On the other hand, some original deities lost their independence, and were merged into others, such as Helios and Apollo, Selene and Artemis. In the popular belief of the post-Homeric time, another numero s class of superhuman beings sprang up, which were regarded as being between gods and men, the demons (Gr. Daimones) and Heroes (q. v.)."—Professor Seyffert's "Dictionary of Classical Antiquities," p. 537.

making age when the famous Nara Narayana worship flourished in India. It was introduced in the tenth* Mandala, 90th Sukta, 4th Astaka, 4th Chapter of the Rig Veda reputed to be Purusha Sukta made by the sage Narayana. In it Birata, body of Purusha, God with three feet, was described laying the foundation of the organic caste system of India out of a sacrifice performed with the separate incantations of Rik, Sama and Yoju. It is remarked in Muir's Sanskrit text as follows :—

"It was evidently produced at a period when the ceremonial of sacrifice was largely developed" ..."Penetrated with a sense of the sanctity and efficacy of the rite, and familiar with all its details, the priestly poet to whom we owe this hymn has thought it no profanity to represent the supreme Purusha himself as forming the victim. (Vol. V., p. 373)".

The Uttarakanda Ramayana says that Nara Narayana worship would flourish at the beginning of Kali Yuga or Dark Age (Book VII, Canto 63, 22 verse). It is evident from the hymns of the Rig Veda that they at first stood for the representation of natural phenomena and later on the forces controlling them. It contains prayers for 33 deities and is thus a manual of divinity worshippers, as well as that of ancestor worshippers. Eventually, in the process of time, it struck the divine sages that they were nothing but the manifestation of one supreme being, the creator of the Universe. This is the outcome of the intensive minds of the Indo-Aryans, who could not accept diversity as the settled order of things but saw through the multiplicity of forms, one fundamental unity which lay at their root. They awoke to the consciousness of this unity while invoking the Vedic gods at the sacrifices. Agni was invoked as the great God, as the Mitra, Baruna and even Indra*.

The evidence of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishada with regard to the process of simplification that was going on in the mind of the more cultured people is very important. It is the ruling of Yajnavalkya, who cited Vaisyadeva Sastra in answer to a question put to him by Vidaghda Sakalya—a Sakalya Brahman—that all gods might be reduced to two and eventually to one, Mahapurasha, who was in later times designated as Narayana. The thirty-three Vedic gods comprise the following:—

The Eight Basus:—Aditya (the Sun), Chandramah (the Moon), the Nakshatras (the Stars), Agni (Fire), Vayu (Air), Devyaloka (Heaven), Antariksha (Sky), and Prithivi (Earth).

The Eleven Rudras:—The five senses and five sources of knowledge पञ्चज्ञानेन्द्रिय and mind.

The Twelve Adityas were the twelve months which come and go in rotation after exacting their dues, growing and preserving, throwing out the old for giving birth to the new.

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* Rigveda मह्द् देवानामात्मसरस्देकेवं "त्वमसि वरुणो जायसे यद् मित्रो भवसि यत् समिद्धः ।

Indra was represented as the source of lightning and giver of rains with thunder.

Prajapati is represented as Yajna (sacrifice) and Indra became subsequently a personification of the attributes of rulership of Heaven, which was transmitted to earthly rulership. Prajapati is Yajna, a source of acquiring strength through the religious rites of the Brahmans, who were the intelligentia of the Indo-Aryan body, and the kings, who as patrons of Brahmins were considered to be the observed of all observers and received the title of (Narottama) the superman among mortals. The monarchical idea was further advanced on Vedic lines in the Bharata Samhita. The king was said to cloak the evils of his authority by charity and performance of religious rites in the same way as a female hides her body by means of clothes.

The eleven Rudras are not characteristic features of a very primitive period of civilisation, as is sometimes sought to be made out by many learned scholars. The personification of the five senses of mind and the five sources of knowledge as gods show an advanced state of mind bent upon philosophical enquiry.

The origin of religion and idea of God is the most interesting subject. It can be traced from the method of rationalism or analysing mythology into human kings, heroes and adventurers, now expressed and called Euthemerism after its founder Enhermeus, a Greek writer who visited India. He wrote a work purporting to explain world mythology. He based his book, it was said, on an inscription on a golden pillar in the temple of Zeus on the Island of Panchea in the neighbourhood of India.*

Plato said :—"Whoever goes uninitiated to Hades will lie in mud, but he who has been purified and is fully initiate, when he comes thither will dwell with the gods."

Pindar says :—"One is the race of men with the race of Gods, for one is the mother that gave to both one breath of life ; yet sundered are they by powers wholly diverse in that mankind is as naught, but Heaven is builded of brass that abideth ever unshaken."

Ancient and modern evidence tend to emphasize the belief in the female origin and control of life. Among the goddesses, one who gave birth to the chief deities, male and female, was the great mother Adya Sakti. The mystic conception of the great mother was bisexual. The Babylonian Nannar (sin), the Moon God, was father and mother of gods and men, likewise the Syrian Baal, the Persian Mithra. Mitra Varuni's offspring are said to have been the great Vasistha and Agastya. The two great dynasties of kings of Ancient India descended from Illa, the son and afterwards daughter of Manu.

* Dr. Oskar Seyffert's "Dictionary of Classical Antiquities." p. 227.

The real interpretation of the cycles of different Manus and their interpretations are to be found in Ancient Roman antiquity.

"Manus in its wider sense is the name given by the Romans to the power of the chief of a family over the whole of that family, especially the power of the husband over his wife, whose person and property were so completely his own that he was legally responsible for her actions, but at the same time had the right to kill, punish or sell her. As in this respect, so also with respect to the right of inheritance, the wife was placed on a level with the children, as she obtained the same share as they." (*Vide* Ibid p. 375).

The idea of famale origin did not find favour very long before the male progenitor. This was ultimately embellished in the philosophical Hiranya Garbha or Birata Purusha, the source of all life, like Ymer of the Scandinavians,* that the under-world deities had origin from the perspiration of his armpits while the demon sprang from his feet. The tree of genealogy shows that Nara and Narayana were brothers, sons of Yama, son of the Sun and grandson of Kasyapa, the father of Garuda. Consequently the relationship between Narayana and Nara as brothers is clear †. The Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda is of later origin and the composition of hymns on Nara by Narayana may mean that Nara was a wise-man like Kapila, who first conceived or fathered the idea of the Narayana cult. Kapila belonged to an earlier period, three or four generations prior to Vaivaswatha Manu, who was a contemporary of Yama, the father of Puranic Nara and Narayana. Like the Indian Yama and the Egyptian Apuatu (Osiris), he discovered the path leading to Paradise, and discovered how mortals could be ferried over the dreaded sea. The Assyrian Ashur was sometimes symbolized by a disk enclosing a feather-robed archer, resting on a bull's head, with spreading horns, on the summit of a standard.

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*The late learned Indian Scholar Tilak traced the origin of the Vedas there. Though not universally accepted, yet it proves the strong inter-relation.

† Marichi, wife, Kala Kardama's daughter.
Kasyapa ,, Suravi
(the Sun) Surjya ,, Samjna, Bisvakarma's daughter.

Yama, wife Murti, Daskha's daughter. — Baibaswata Manu. — Yamuna (daughter).

(sons of Yama) Nara. — Narayana.

(sons of Baibaswata Manu) Illa. — Ikshaku — Sarjati.

Sarjati — Sukanya, Chayavana's wife

Illa — Pururaba, son of Budha and grandson of Moon.

"Ea, in one of the myths, built the world "as an architect builds a house" (Fastrow's Religious Belief in Babylonia and Assyria, p. 88). According to the Rigveda the Aryo-Indian god Indra similarly constructed the house of the universe, which appears to have been supported by the "world tree" (Indian Myth and Legend, p. 10). The world-supporting tree, Ygdrasil, figures in Teutonic Mythology. Mount Meru, the Indian Olympus, which supports the Paradise of Indra, is "the world spine." In Egypt the ded (dad, or tet) amulet is the spine of Osiris in his character as the world-god. (p. 305). All the ancient deities reflected the habits of life of their worshippers, and retained traces of savage conceptions after they assumed benevolent attributes among cultured people. The Hellenic Rhea, although called the "Mother of the Gods," was not a self-created being, but the daughter of Gaja, the earth mother, and Uranus the sky father, who equate with the Aryo Indian Dyaus, and Prithivi, the sky father and earth mother of Indra. (173) Icarus thus met a similar fate to Etana, of Babylonian fame, Nimrod in the Koran legend, and the son of the eagle giant Garuda, in the Indian Epic Ramayana. Etana and Nimrod ascended on the backs of eagles, whose pinions were burnt by the sun. The Indian eagle was similarly punished for its presumption. (Babylonian Myth and Legend, pp. 165 *et seq*.)"*

It is indeed interesting to find that the eagle is a standard of a Roman legend. Indian elephants were first used in European warfare by the successors of Alexander for the purpose of breaking through the enemy's ranks.

"The personification of the world-ruling city was first worshipped as a goddess Roma (Dea Roma) by some cities of Asia Minor in the 2nd Century B. C. She was represented under the image of a Tyche (q. v.), with the mural crown on her head and with all the attributes of prosperity and power. Under Augustus her cult in the Hellenic cities was united partly with that of Augustus, partly with that of the deified Caesar, Divus Iulius."†

The Roma and Rama of the Ramayana can easily be identified, for Professor Max Muller says:

'The siege of Troy is a repetition of the daily siege of the east by the Solar powers that are robbed of their brightest treasures in the West"

Mr. Cox, one of his critics, added a new hypothesis when he said:

"Few will venture to deny that the stealing of the bright clouds of sunset by the dark powers of night, the weary search for them through the long night, the battle with the robbers, as the darkness is driven away by the advancing chariot of the lord of light are favourite subjects with the Vedic poets. If such a war took place it must be carried back to a time preceding the dispersion of the Aryan tribes from their original home. The peasants of Greece at the present day remember Lamia, the "Queen of Libya", who was loved by Zeus."

"The worship of Zeus, the father-god, had a political significance. He was imposed as the chief deity on various Pantheons by the Hellenic conquerors of prehistoric Greece, but local deities suffered little or no change except in name. Dionysus might be called Zeus, but he still continued to be Dionysus, the son of the Great Mother, and did not became Zeus the self-created father-god. In India there is a ferocious goddess, who resembles Annis of Leicester. This is Black Kali. She is usually depicted dancing the "dance of fertility", like the Aurignacian and Bushman

*Donald A. Mackenzie's "Myths of Crete and Pre-Hellenic-Europe," pp. 305, 172, 173 and 112.

† Seyffert's "Dictionary of Classical Antiquities," p 548.

deities. Modern artists have given her normal eyes, but have retained also the primitive forehead eye. She wears a necklace of human or giant heads, and from her girdle dangle the hands and skins of victims. It would appear that Kali, whose body was smeared with the sacrificial blood, was a form of the earth-goddess; her harvest form was Jagadgauri, the yellow woman; while as the love and fertility deity she was the beautiful Lakshmi or Sri, she was Durga as the Goddess of war (Indian Myth and Legend, pp. xi, and 149-50) The identification of the god with an animal suggests totemism. In one of the early culture stages it was believed that the spirit of the eponymous tribal ancestor existed in a bull, a bear, a pig, or a deer, as the case might be. Invariably the animal was an edible one—the source of the food supply, or the guardian of it Osiris in one part of Egypt was a bull and in another a goat. He appears also to have had a boar form. Set went out to hunt a wild boar when he found the body of Osiris and tore it in pieces."*

Greek mythology, in which the beliefs of various ethnic elements were fused, and savage traditions were ultimately transformed by philosophic speculations, survives mainly as the product of a cultured age. But the poets and artists did not divest it wholly of its primitive traits. What Zeus is to the Greeks Jupiter is to the Romans, the essence of all divine power. The very name of Zeus (Sanskrit Dyaus), the bright sky, identifies him as the God of the sky and its phenomena. As such he was everywhere worshipped on the highest mountains, on whose summits he was considered to be enthroned. Homer describes him in power greater than all the Gods put together. The Romans had domestic altars where burnt offerings were made to Zeus. He is called the father of Gods and men, giver of victory and ruler of the world. No deity received such worldspread worship. The eagle and the oak were sacred to Zeus, the eagle, together with the sceptre and lightning, is also one of his customary attributes. The most famous statue of Zeus in antiquity was executed by Phidias in gold and ivory for the temple at Olympia, with a divine expression of the highest dignity and benevolence, as if listening to prayer. It is one of the seven wonders of the world. The Romans offered oblations to the dead like the Hindus, which is designated dii manes and the word Mantika is used by the Greeks for the art of divination. The belief of the ancient Hindus that the sages knew everything by meditation and prayer and dreams is traced in Greece and Rome. Prophesying from stars did not become known in Greece till the time of Alexander the Great. Winds were regarded by Greeks and Romans as divine beings. In Rome the tempests had a sanctuary of their own with regular sacrifices at the Porta Capena, founded in 259 B. C. The tower of the winds is still standing in excellent condition at Athens. They believed in ambrosia, the food of the Gods conferring and preserving immortality. The Greeks borrowed the art of weaving from the Orientals.

*Donald A. Mackenzie's "Myths of Crete and Pre-Hellenic-Europe", pp. 172, 153 64 and 158.

It is universally admitted that Greece and Europe came in direct contact with India through trade, and, after Alexander's invasion, very much with Indian literature, mythology and religion, etc. Alexandria then, in the time of the great conqueror, became famous as the great library and soon came to be recognised as the true intellectual capital of the Hellenic world. Whatever the critics may say, unbiassed European scholars admit that the Ancient Indians were the pioneers in religion, science and literature. The Asiatic luxuries introduced in Europe were the true cause of the downfall of Greece and Rome. The Greeks were familiar with the practise of multiplying copies of books by transcription, either for public or private use. The Athenians had a special market place in the fifth Century B. C. The Hindu religious practices are nothing strange, but they were accepted by the Western nations as they came in contact with them. The principle of monogamy was predominent as early as the Homeric age. The Homeric powers represent the son as leaving the choice of wife to his father and the father as disposing at will of his daughter's hand. The suitor usually offered to pay the girl's father a certain number of oxen or other objects of value.* This is absolutely a Hindu idea. The word Mitra, which is prefixed to Baruni, the mother of the two renowned sages, Agastya and Vasistha, explains the custom of using a veil by women. It cannot be overlooked that the double temple in honour of Roma or Rama and of Venus or Sita being consecrated on the 21st April, the Romanavami day, between the old Forum and Colosseum, supports the words of the great Professor Max Muller and his critic that the Trojan War was copied from the Ramayana. Romantic narratives, it is admitted, appear among the Greeks and Romans after the time of Alexander the Great, when they were brought into direct contact with the East.

" Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid
Some banished lover or some captive Maid.
They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires
Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires.
The virgin's wish, without her fears, impart,
Excuse the blush and pour out all the heart.
Speech the soft intercourse from soul and soul,
And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole."—(Pope).

The appointment of the priests required some qualifications among the Hindus and consequently they went through regular courses of training and teaching in the monasteries under proficient teachers. A number of state cults were handed over to each of the individual classes and associations. A distinguished position was attained by the sage who superintended the entire ritual and was known by the name of Brahma. Priests were the technical advisers of the state and

* *Vide* p. 376.

the people on any new questions that arose in regard to it. The students who learned under a 'distinguished teacher received his patronymic Gotra. The kings, likewise, were distinguished with the following of worship with the distinction of descending from the moon or the sun. The aim of early Indian education was supposed to be the harmonious development of mind, spirit and body alike. The importance of education in a monastery rests in the fact that many great men of the age connected with the Vedic hymns and Epic structure were the pupils of such monasteries, the ideal *alma maters* of the ancient order of teachers and priests.

In solitude men find ample time for contemplation and active exercise of the understanding, and find leisure for the agreeable task of teaching their young, sincere pupils, engaged to help them as their own children. The schools were then not in cities, where children could daily witness the thousand examples of discipation, immorality, indolence and luxury. The religious observances and examples of the sages in the monasteries placed before the young students practical examples of ideal lives, as examples are better than precepts. The Ancient Indian students learnt everything from them. They were very active, not only in body and mind but in soul. The dwellers in the ancient monasteries of India thus performed the important part of reclaiming the forests as well as training the children. The young students performed the household duties,—tending cattle, drawing water, etc.,—and received the patronymic Gotra of their preceptor, then considered a very high distinction. These priests very soon attained the distinguished position and power of king-makers and religious preceptors of the whole nation. The priests received large presents of corn, land and well-known horses as fees from their pupils or for performing sacrifices for the kings or conquerors.

India afforded ample opportunities for the vanquished people to found colonies to escape subjection to the detested enemy. It might have been as a sequel to either civil or religious disorders, or to establish trade relations with the bordering and foreign countries. A person of distinction was chosen to guide the immigrants and make all necessary arrangements for their settling in a new place. It was, however, an old custom to send out inoffensive men in advance to settle, with the purpose of securing new conquests. But a novel method was employed in the case of the conquest of Ceylon by employing herds of domesticated monkeys, with everything necessary for helping the army of conquest of the Ramayana. The religious recluses did their best to colonise the forest, full of wild beasts and cannibals. They were often rewarded with the priesthood of the conquering heroes. All the

ancient deities reflected the habits of life of their worshippers, and retained traces of savage conceptions after they assumed benevolent attributes among cultured peoples. In shaping gods the early people made them ideals of what they sought or feared most. Hence one finds that animal-headed supernatural beings are depicted in cave drawings and in mythology.

The process of evolution was from great powerful beast to the great man. Narasingha Avatar killed Hiranya Kasipu. Demeter at Phigalia was horse-headed, and there were serpents in her hair. It was chiefly, however, as a provider of the food supply that Demeter was addressed. Demeter's connection with the underworld emphasizes her character as a Fate—a goddess of birth and death, who controlled and measured the lives of mankind. Demeter's great festival was called the Eleusina, the legendary explanation being that it was first celebrated at Eleusis, in Attica. One of its features was the mystic ceremony of initiation. Undoubtedly in Pre-Hellenic Greece, an ancient myth in which Demeter is associated, not with the young god Dionysus, who links with Osiris, Attis, and Tammuz, but with a young goddess. In India the story of Sita, who was an incarnation of Lakshmi, is suggestive in this connection. This heroine of the Ramayana, having served her purpose on earth, departs to the Underworld. In India, which suffers at one season from great heat and drought, he conceived the Drought Demon, which imprisoned the fertilizing waters in a mountain cave. Just when the world is about to perish, the god Indra comes to its rescue armed with his thunderbolt. He attacks and slays the demon, exclaiming :

> I am the hurler of the bolt of thunder ;
> For man flow freely now the gleaming waters.

After this thunder-battle, rain descends in torrents, the withered grass sprouts luxuriantly, and the rice harvest follows. (Britta's death is referred to).

In Babylonia the demon is the water-monster Tiamat, who enters the Euphrates and causes it to flood. She is slain and cut up by Merodach, who thus sets the world in order. Then the farmer sows his seeds. In Egypt the inundation of the Nile is brought about by Ra, who, having undertaken to destroy his human enemies, relents and withdraws the waters so that seeds may be cast in the fertilized soil and the harvest gathered in season. Pious worshippers of the deities who controlled the forces of nature were expected to perform ceremonies and offer sacrifices to assist or propitiate them. Thus the local forms of religion were shaped by local phenomena, of which the myths are

reflections. The custom of effecting a ceremonial connection with a Holy place still survives.

"Every weapon has its demon," runs an old Gaelic axiom. In the Indian Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, the spirits of celestial weapons appear before the heroes, to whom they are gifted by deities, in attitudes signifying their willingness to render obedient and helpful service. Discovery has also been made of what appears to have been the Magdalenian "bull roarer". In Australia this implement is used to invoke spirits at initiation and other ceremonies, and elsewhere to raise the wind, that is, to compel the attention of the wind-god. The Egyptian sistrum similarly summoned the god when it was tinkled in temples. In India the ritualistic Brahmans performed magical acts to prevent the demons intercepting sacrifices intended for the Gods. The Egyptian and Babylonian priests practised magic to influence the gods. The fusion of religion and magic gave rise to many complex practices and systems of belief.

In India the gods were prominent in the Vedic period and during the post-Vedic period goddesses ceased to be vague. They became the outstanding personalities as "Great Mothers". The religious history of the human race has been marked by stages—Naturalism, Totemism, Animism, Demonology, Monotheism—but it cannot be suggested that human thoughts did not accumulate strata of ideas in regular sequence in any scientific way like Geology or Archæology. The Chinese, who are reputed to be the oldest nation famous for their conservatism, have specialised as ancestor worshippers. The religious stages of the world cannot be explained by any defined hypothesis. The law of descent by the male or female or the form of worship are relics of very great importance in tracing the social and religious significance of a nation. There is a view that in all primitive communities matriarchal conditions preceded patriarchal and likewise in the matter of the worship of gods and goddesses. But Hindus of the spiritual world attach greater importance to the teacher and interpreter of a religion, who invests them with spiritual lives. The ancestors find the general path, for many are worshipped. The Indian Yama, who like a colt kicked his nursing step-mother Chaya (Prakrati), leads man along the way after death and became the God of the dead and incarnation of piety. His sons are Nara and Narayana of Puranic mythology, called Dhata and Bidhata. In other words, the ideal man of the world is always afraid of the God of death and the day of judgment and Narayana, the mentor and guide of the soul who will guide the world in the last journey to Heaven and Paradise. A patriarch or teacher used to be worshipped in this way and was transformed into a deity. It is said

that certain Gods descended from Heaven to teach the world by examples for certain periods, killing the enemies of humanity. These were the incarnation of God.

In the Indo-Aryan periods ages were developed into doctrinal stages of (Dharma) piety called Yugas. Markandeya, one of the deathless sages of Indian mythology, was a worshipper of Narayana and author of a Purana, and is mentioned in the Mahabharata. He conceived the grand idea of popularising Narayana worship under the Samkhya system of philosophy, first propounded by Kapila. The idea of dividing the ages with the growing ends of civilisation by ideas of Gods and heroes no longer appealed to him. The idea of Narayana, immersed in meditation as Creator with the help of Maya illusion and destroying the fearful demons, did not appeal to him as it did not satisfy the general body of worshippers. Maya was represented in the Mother goddess (Adya Sakti), which roused Narayana from his slumber after the great deluge and became the embodiment of all the strength and attributes of gods, worshipped riding on a lion with eight hands representing the winds of eight directions (four corners and four sides) full of weapons and energy. Narasinghadeb of Swtya Juga was reversed into the Goddess Singhabahini, a girl of exquisite beauty and spirit, riding on a lion, who killed the buffalo, the votive offering of sacrifices, and charmed the powerful demons into weak frail creatures to fall at her feet and become victims of death. No Vedic sacrifices, sacrificers or heroes were sought to accomplish the end.

The four different ages of Puranic conceptions were devoted to the gods, heroes on caste influence of different ages, and Greece followed suit in the Trojan heroes. The ancient teachers of Hindu religion framed myths expounding timely forms of the doctrine of the world's ages. No thunder or lightning or celestial weapon was used in the wars of the Asuras, the destruction by Singhabahini or Durga or Mahishamaradini. The priestly sages had no cause for grievance, for the odes to the great goddess of Heaven's energy appealed better than the hymns of the Vedas and are still prevalent all over India with unabated zeal. There are now thousands and thousands who recite Chandi as it used to be with the Vedas in the time of the performance of sacrifices. The great Indian Epics grew in the heyday of sacrifices. The sacrifices were, no doubt, fire worship at first till fire became the medium of offering oblations to the God. Kapila wanted to replace the elementary fire with the spiritual one of knowledge, and burning was made a sort of punishment or trial. Erring priests and wives in ancient times were burnt at the stake. Ancients believed that all the forces of evil men are let loose at times of seasonal change,

and human beings, their wealth and domesticated animals specially required to be protected against those evil forces. The worship of the goddess takes place even in these seasons. These were symbolised as luck ceremonies in later days.

The Vedic sages ascribed heroic deeds to Indra, and the connection of Ahalya with Indra was explained away as an allegory at the sacrifice in his Tantra Vartika (I: 3, 4 (a)). In the Ramayana, Rama exonerated Ahalya by accepting hospitality at her hands of what her husband named for his acceptance. Ahalya was the mother of Satananda, the priest of Janaka and father of Sita. The Rig Vedic king Diyodasa was the brother of Ahalya, married to Goutama. Dasaratha and Divodasa were contemporaneous kings. Bharadwaja was the son of Brihaspati through his brother's wife. Mamata was instrumental in Pratardan's recovering his paternal kingdom of Benares from the Haihayas and Taljanghas. Pratardan went to the coronation of Rama. It is mentioned in the Ramayana. All these settle the important question of the age in which the heroes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata lived and moved. The imaginary period of Puranic Mannantaras cannot be established. They are merely exaggerations.

The Mahabharata opens with the account of the monastery of Ayodhyadhaumya, where students received literary, moral, social, seientific, religious and philosophic instruction. It was a time when parents were not the instructors of their children and were not favourably approved of by society. Gotra naturally does not therefore follow the descent but that of the name of a teacher as a rule. The descendant was then distinguished with the name of the great progenitors, such as Bhargava, Angirasa, Vasistha, Kasyapa, etc. The students performed the functions of children to those retired sages of the hermitages in every way. They were protected by their preceptors and in return they wholeheartedly tried to protect them and their family and Gotra prestige. Students were tried by their preceptors as to their morality, moderation and culture before they were discharged from those monasteries. Sometimes they rewarded the pupils with their daughters to continue the important position of the preceptors in those institutions. Brihaspati's son Kacha received lessons from Bhrigu's son.

Atri's son Dattatreya's great disciple was Kartabirjarjuna, the king of Haihayas, a great Kshatriya king of kings. He was represented with a thousand hands, which might mean the number of Feudatory Chiefs under him. He was not a respecter of Brahmanas or performer of sacrifices. He was admonished by the God's messenger, the wind, but in vain. He killed the descendant of Bhrigu, Jamadagni, whose son

Parusurama avenged his father's death, not only by killing Kartabirjarjuna but by exterminating the race of the Kshatriyas twenty-one times. He killed his mother at the instance of his father and was expiated at the shrine, near the great field Kurukshettra, where many decisive battles were fought from time immemorial. The reciter of the Mahabharata represented that he was coming from that shrine Samanta Panchaka, alluding to the shrine where great events of the past took place. The great Kasyapa followed the method of Baman, the incarnation of God, who transferred Bali from Heaven to Patala, an infernal region, for his great vanity in distributing great wealth at the religious sacrifices he undertook.

Parasurama is said to be an incarnation of God blessed with immortality. His weapon was the axe. It was evidently of remote origin. In the proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology Vol. XXII, pp. 300-301, the axe appears to be a symbol in the pre-historic remains of the funeral caves of the Marne of Scandinavia and America. Small axes were used as charms in Malta and elsewhere, and in the Congo the sacred axe survives even now. Votive axes have been found in Cretan graves and sanctuaries. Mr. Leggæ is of the opinion that tke symbolic use of the axe goes back to the Neolithic and perhaps the Palæolithic Age. The sword of the Scoto-Irish folk-heor Finn-mac-Coul was called 'Mac-an-Luid', Rama of the Ramayana is adopted by the spirits of his celestial weapon, Krishna for his disc (Sudarshan Chackra), Arjuna for his celestial weapon of Siva, which were named.

Parasurama was convinced of his great guilt and thought of expiating his sins by sacrifice. Kasyapa officiated in the sacrifice of Parasurama to expiate his sins and Kasyapa officiated as his chief priest. As his honorarium he asked him to give him all that he conquered by the feat of his arms and to retire to an island outside the world of the gift named. This was done and all the Kshatriya princes who hid in the provinces of Bengal and Behar and Orissa were re-installed on their fathers' thrones by Kasyapa. The very object of Parasurama's matricide was not only frustrated but added fuel to the fire by the cruel destruction of the powerful kings and princes, leaving their female members at the mercy of the world. This was recited in the Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter L(50).

The name of Kasyapa is well-known as the progenitor of Devas, Asuras, Daitas, human beings, etc., and he thus saved the Kshatriya race from extinction. But it is clearly said that he revived the Kshatriya race. The Queen with the young princes and princesses took shelter in Vaisya, with goldsmith, artisan and Sudra families as well as

in the hermitages of Parasara and Gautama. They were hidden in cow-pens and were reared by kine and even wild bears. It then became apparent to them to organise society on rigid rules of marriage. They were not then formed on religious, moral and social decorum, due to the proposed devastating extermination of the Kshatriya race. The name of Kasyapa was as important in the Ancient Epic as the progenitor of Devas, Daityas, Asuras, Danabas, men, etc., as the reviver of the Kshatriya race, and putting control on promiscuity amongst men and women. His co-wives demonstrated the miseries of life and the fight of step-children resulted in disaster and ruin.

It undoubtedly inculcates the belief that true love does not consist in loving what is mortal in the body of a man or a woman but what is eternal, the soul within. The divine love is reflected in the ideal Purusha Nara, who was revealed to Narayana as an illustrious sage, the hymn maker of the Rig Veda, the divider of the Vedas for the performance of sacrifices not with human or animal flesh to propitiate god but with the selfish, frail body with which a god was used to be represented, fond of Soma juice and oblations in a sacrifice and founder of the Barnasrama religion in India. A harmony between two forms of Indo-Aryan worship was thus established in the Barnasrama religion, and its acceptance by the people is recorded in the Samhita or Hindu institutes.

The introduction of the Narayana cult, apart from its contribution to the racial struggle, was the means by which reconciliation was brought about between two different forms of worship among the Indo-Aryans. In this connection it is necessary to recount the episode of Kapila. Kapila was the grandson of Svyambhuva Manu through his daughter, but it appears that he was not attached to any special tribe or line of kings as a priest. He asked for land from the Creator which was not given to him. In angei he cursed his progenitor and plunged the world under an untimely deluge. He destroys both Devajajna and Pitrijajna and establishes a religious path of renunciation through knowledge as the best means of liberation. He destroyed the numerous children of Sagara, who came to fetch the sacrificial horse which strayed into his (hermitage) Ashrama. It was left to Bhagiratha, who took the river Ganges into Bengal across the kingdom of Panchala to Kapila's hermitage, to secure the redemption of the children of Sagara, his ancestors, from the utter ruin caused by Kapila's curse. The great philosopher Kapila lived on the seaside and had his hermitage in Bengal, and Tamralipta or Tamlook was an old sea port. Bengal is proud of Kapila's shrine and his conception of the philosophic creator of the Universe on the vast ocean, the empire of Baruna, the God of Gods,

resting on the hood of a monster serpent, Basuki, whom the ignorant believed to have held the earth, soaring in the sky on the back of a monster bird, Garuda, who defeated the great king of gods Indra, snatching ambrosia from him, a feat not accomplished even by the great powerful invulnerable Asuras.

The Brahmans were now thrown on the defensive. They had to modify their earlier beliefs with regard to animal sacrifices, and also to accept the view that the charges for the performance were excessive and wrong. The dialogue between Syuma Rashmi and Kapila, between the old school of thought and the new Brahmin school of philosophy which laid stress on Yoga as a means of salvation, deserves careful study. That it is important as an introduction to the Bharata Samhita would be manifest from the reference to the summary of the contents quoted already, in which it is said that in the Bharata Samhita "has also been described He who is Adhyatma and who partakes of the attributes of the five elements and He to whom unmanifested and other words cannot be applied. And also He whom the Yotis possessed of meditation and tapa behold in their hearts as the reflection of an image in a mirror." Bengal is proud of this conception of god Narayana, which has no parallel in any of the scriptures of other nations of the world. Narayana stood as the beau-ideal of Aryan Gods, before whom the great Kapila in his shrine sacrificed his vicious circle of self with the pleasures of the senses to realise the higher self within and to hold communion with the spirit which transcends the great creation.

Happy are they who dream of life for higher things than merely those possessions of earth and self! A man should lament at having to die sooner or later without enjoyment and the gratification of the senses—this is neither philosophy nor religion. The first office of wisdom must be to make due valuation of things and their due relations and use them according to their worth. It is then that man sacrifices his body and self for the happiness and joy of realising the soul and spirit of the universe. This is the sacrifice which the ancient seers enjoyed in their hermitage and produced pupils who composed Vedic hymns and philosophies of their time to bring out truth. The kings performed the public sacrifices for the good of the country and the people realised their greatness to see that the surplus money of the tributes of the people was used for their good, the propagation of religion and encouraging educational institutions and their worthy students. The priests and kings of Ancient India were all learned men of their day, famous for their piety and divine knowledge. The stages of human life were divided like the seasons of the year. The seasons of childhood, youth, manhood and old age were the great gifts of God,

material changes necessary for the success of life through culture and experience. The great teachers and the patriarchs of the early days knew the proper use of time and taught them properly for realising the soul and the spirit within and without the world and to hold communion with the Creator of this Universe. Lord Bacon said:

"Homer hath given more men their livings than either Scylla of Caesar or Augustus ever did, notwithstanding their great largesses and donations, and distribution of lands to so many legions; and no doubt it is hard to say whether arms or learning have advanced greater numbers. And in case of sovereignity we see that if arms of descent have carried away the kingdom, yet learning hath carried the priesthood, which ever hath been in some competition with Empire."

Shakespeare described the priesthood of Europe as follows:—

"Attend; This holy fox or wolf or both—for he is equal ravenous. As he is subtle, and as prone to mischief. As able to perform it."

The holy sages of Ancient India did not tally with the description of the Western priesthood and it is only natural to infer that the Aryans of India did not come from the West. The holy sages of India first conceived the idea of religion in their secluded hermitage and Kapila was the father of the great Indian Philosophy of religion Samkhya. The great Indian Epic owes its existence to it.

The story which is cited below gives an important clue to the reason which gave rise to metaphysical speculations and as the theme is developed one would notice also the other and probably more important urge for formulating a new school of thought.

The story cited in the Mahabharata proceeds in the following manner:—

"We have heard that in days of Yore when the god Tvastr came to the place of king Nahusa, the latter for satisfying the duties of hospitality was on the point of slaying a cow in accordance with the true ancient and eternal injunction of the Vedas."

"Kapila of liberal soul, seeing the cow tied for slaughter ever following Sattwik duties, always engaged in controlling his senses, endowed with true knowledge and sparing in diet, having gained an excellent understanding, that was characterised by faith, perfectly fearless, beneficial, firm, and ever directed towards truth uttered. Alas ye Vedas! At that time a sage by name Syuma Rashmi, entering the form of the cow addressed the Yoti Kapila saying,—' Silence O Kapila.'

"If the Vedas are censurable, whence have those other duties come to be regarded as authoritative, men given to penance and endowed with intelligence, and who have the Shrutis and knowledge, for their eyes consider the injunction of the Vedas, which have been declared through and compiled by the sages to be the words of God himself."*

The dialogue which follows between these two sages gives clear and concise views of the orthodox and of the new hetrodox school on which the Bharata Samhita is based. The views of the orthodox school were, according to Syuma Rashmi, that one should celebrate sacrifices

* Shanti Parva Chapter CCLXVIII.

from desire of Heaven. Altogether seven (domestic) and seven (wild) animals are declared fit for sacrifice. One who celebrates sacrifices leading to Heaven acquires greater rewards in the next world in the form of heavenly bliss. The next item of the faith of the orthodox school was that the householder who supports the other orders of life lives the highest and the best kind of life. He challenges those who maintain that domesticity cannot bring on the acquisition of liberation. Only those who have no faith and wisdom and penetration, only those who have no reputation, who are idle and toilworn, who have misery in their lot on account of their pristine deeds, only those who are destitute of learning, see the profusion of tranquility in a life of mendicancy.

The three classes of Pitris, the Archismats, the Varhishads and the Krvyads, approve of the necessity of mantras about the dead, and the mantras are regarded as powerful causes.

The false doctrine of incorporal existence called emancipation, seemingly consistent with truth, but subversive of the real meaning of the injunctions of the Vedas, has been introduced by learned men shorn of prosperity and eaten up by idleness. The Brahmana who celebrates sacrifices according to the injunctions of the Vedas is never seduced by sin. Through sacrifices such a person acquires high regions of happiness along with the animals he has killed in those sacrifices, and himself, pleased by the acquisition of all his wishes, succeeds in pleasing those animals by fulfilling their wishes. By neglecting the Vedas, by guile or by deception, one never succeeds in attaining to the supreme. On the other hand it is by practising Vedic rites that one succeeds in attaining to Brahma.

The views of Kapila as enunciated by him are given below:—

"I do not censure the Vedas. I do not wish to disparage them. We have heard that the different classes of duty laid down for the different modes of life, all lead to the same end. The Sannyasin attains to a high end, the hermit also attains to a high end, both the other two also, *viz.*, the householder and the Brahmacharin attain to the same end. The Vedas lay down, perform Acts, they also declare,—'Do not perform acts'. If abstention from act produces merit then their performance must be highly reprehensible. When the scriptures say this the strength or weakness of particular sayings must be very difficult to determine. Seeing that all the fruits that can be gained by acts are mistakable, instead of being eternal, Yotis by adopting selfcontrol and tranquility attain to Brahma through the path of knowledge. There is nothing in any of the worlds that can stand in their way. They have, in their own understanding, formed fixed conclusions regarding all destructible objects and at a life of Renunciation, devoted to Brahma and already at one with Brahma, they have taken refuge in Brahma. Getting over grief and freed from the quality of darkness their acquisitions are eternal. When the high end of these men is within reach of attainment, what need has one for performing the duties of the domestic mode of life.

"There are the Darsha, the Paurana Masha, the Agnihotra, the Chaturmashya and other rites which intelligent men should perform. Eternal merit consists in their performance. Those that have adopted the Sanyasa mode of life, who abstain from all acts, who are endued with patience. who are cleansed, and who are conversant with Brahma, succeed by such knowledge or Brahma in satisfying the debts to the gods, (also the Pitris and the Rishis), described to be so very fond of libations poured in sacrifice. The very gods become stupefied in finding out the path of that pathless person who forms himself the soul of all creatures and who regards all creatures impartially. Through instructions delivered by the preceptor one knows that which lives within this body to be of a four-fold nature, having besides four doors and four mouths. In consequence of two arms the organ of speech. the stomach, and the organ of pleasure, the very duties are to have four doors. One should, therefore, do his best to keep those doors under control. One should not gamble with dice. One should not appropriate others' properties. One should not officiate at the sacrifice of a person of a mean birth. One should not, yielding to anger, smite another with hands or feet. That intelligent man who acts thus is said to have his hands and feet well-governed. One should not make loud abuse or censure. One should not speak useless words. One should forbear from knavery and from accusing others. One should observe the vow of truthfulness, be sparing of speech and always careful. By acting thus one will have his organ of speech well-governed. One should not abstain entirely from food. One should not eat too much. One should give up covetousness, and always seek company of the good. One should eat only so much as is necessary for keeping life. By acting thus one succeeds in properly governing the door represented by his stomach. One should not, O hero, out of lust take another wife when he has a wedded wife. One should never call a woman to bed except in her season. One should confine himself to his own married spouse without seeking union with other women. By acting thus one is said to have his organ of pleasure properly governed. That wise man is truly a regenerate person who has all his four doors, *viz.*, the organ of pleasure, the stomach the two arms (and two feet) and the organ of speech properly governed. Everything becomes useless of that person whose doors are not well governed. Of what avail are the penances of such a man? Of what avail are his sacrifices? What can be gained by his body? The gods consider him a Brahmana who has cast off his upper garment, who sleeps on the naked earth, who makes his arm a pillow and whose heart is endued with tranquility. That person who, given to contemplation, singly enjoys all the happiness that married couples enjoy, and who pays no attention to the joys and griefs of others, should be known as a Brahmana. That man who properly understands all this as it really is and its various metamorphoses, and who knows what the end is of all created objects, is known by the gods as a Brahmana. One who entertains no fear from any creature and from whom no creature has any fear, and who forms himself the soul of all creatures, should be known as a Brahmana. Without having gained purity of heart, which is the true end of all religious acts, such as gifts and sacrifices, the greatest, the men of foolish understandings do not succeed in acquiring a knowledge of what is necessary in making one a Brahmana even when explained by preceptors. Shorn of a knowledge of all this, these men desire fruits of a different sort, *viz.* Heaven and its joys. Unable to practise even a small part of that good conduct which has descended from remote times, which is eternal, which is characterised by certainty, which enters as a thread in all our duties, and by following which men of knowledge belonging to all the modes of life convert their respective duties and penances into dreadful weapons for killing the ignorance and evils of worldliness, men of foolish understandings regard acts which yield visible fruits, which are fraught with the highest power, and that are deathless, as fruitless after all and as

deviations not sanctioned by the Scriptures. In sooth, however, that conduct comprising practices the very opposite of those that are seen in times of distress, is the very essence of carefulness and is never affected by lust and anger and other passions of a similar nature. About sacrifices again, it is very difficult to determine all their particulars. If ascertained, it is very difficult to follow them in practice. If practised, the fruits which they beget are terminable. Mark this well."*

The new school of thought with which the Bharata Samhita is identified is thus very clearly propounded by Kapila. In it we find that the position of the upholder of the sacrifices has been assailed from several points of view. The Brahmin who urges the king to perform sacrifices in the hope of reward of heaven is not the real Brahmin. If the origin of the word Brahmin is sought in the early Vedic literature, he will be seen to have been one who supervises the rituals and ceremonies at the sacrifices. The new school would not call such a skilled performer of sacrifices, a Brahmin. The real Brahmin is one who, given to contemplation singly enjoys all the happiness and who pays no attention to the joys and griefs of others. The sacrifices which were undertaken with the object of a reward, either on the part of the priest or on the part of the performer, are declared valueless from the spiritual point of view. The life of a householder may be regarded as a socially useful institution, but the life of a Sanyasi must be esteemed to be of higher spiritual value. The limited and variable spiritual benefit which a householder derives from the performance of sacrifices depend upon the measure of his moral goodness.

The ethical code laid down in this connection is of great importance in reference to the earlier period of Vedic sacrifices, during which these are undertaken by kings and sages who did not attach much value to the moral virtues of forbearance and selflessness. Only a person who is given to Yoga, who has satisfied all his duties, who is capable of roving everywhere, depending only on his own body, who has brought his soul under perfect restraint, who has gone above the requirements of the science of morality and who disregards the whole world, can transgress the declarations of the Vedas regarding acts, and say that there is liberation.

Now the philosophical background of this system of Kapila is further explained in a beautiful manner by Vasistha in a dialogue between him and king Janaka of Videha. This is what he says:—

"Listen now to me, O king, as to how the subject of liberation has been explained among the great persons conversant with the Samkhya and the Yoga system of philosophy. That which the Yogins behold is exactly what the Samkhyas strive after to attain. He who sees the Samkhya and the Yoga system to be one and the same is said to be gifted with intelligence.

"Skin, flesh, blood, fat, bile, marrow and sinews and those senses of which you were speaking to me, exist. Objects originate from objects, the senses from the

*Shanti Parva, Chapter CCLXVIII.

senses. From body one acquires a body as a seed is obtained from seed. When the supreme being is without senses, without matter, without body, he must be divested of all qualities and on account of his being so how indeed can he have qualities of any kind. Ether and other qualities originate from the qualities of goodness and darkness and ignorance and disappear in the end in them. Thus the qualities arise from nature and disappear in nature. The individual soul and the universe are said to both partake of nature characterised by the three qualities of goodness, darkness and ignorance. The supreme soul is different from both the individual soul and the universe. As the seasons, though having no forms, are nevertheless inferred from the appearance of particular fruits and flowers, similarly Nature, though formless, is inferred from the principles of greatness and the rest that originates from it."

This school of philosophy is traced to Kapila, who flourishes in the age of Svyumbhuva Manu. If the chronology between the times of Uddalaka Aruni and Kapila is carefully examined, he will be found to have preceded the latter by about 250 or 300 years. Kapila is a contemporary of Sagara and Uddalaka Aruni is a contemporary of Kalmasapada and Janmejoya I. Between them there intervenes a few generations.

Many are the stories which centre round Uddalaka Aruni. He is commissioned by his preceptor Ayoddhaummya to block a leaking dam and he does this with his own body as no other way presents itself to him. After passing through a period of great hardship, he leaves his preceptor's Ashrama as a great Vedic scholar. His son Svetaketu is mentioned in the Epic as having introduced marriage and ended the non-married state by decrees by which he forbade adultery and desertion on both sides during the married state. But though Svetaketu effects an important social change, he is nevertheless instructed by his father Uddalaka Aruni into the intitial stage of metaphysical inquiry. The Upanishads mention the name of Nachiketa as the son of Uddalaka Aruni. Nachiketa, who is thirsting for knowledge, utilises his sojourn in the underworld to question Yama, the god of death, about the state after death and the beyond and learns from him the doctrine of the immortality of the Atman. In the Mahabharata, Nachiketa asks to see the paradise of the cow-givers and Yama delights him with a long lecture upon the merit which one acquires by presenting cows. The Upanishads contain stories, most of which are treated in a more practical way in the Mahabharata.

The devotion of students to their preceptor astonished the gods when Upamanyu would not accept the boon from Asvins to regain his lost eyesight through the eating of certain leaves (Arka Patra) without the order of his preceptor.

The terrible god of vengeance evolves into the merciful god as the race attains higher planes of idealism and ceases to pay tribute to a horde of malignant spirits for extreme malevolence, like snake sacrifice, etc., the extermination of a race. Such was the case in the fight between the Devas and the Asuras. The great king of Gods Indra was dethroned and Nahusa, a king of mortal men, placed on the throne of Heaven. But when presumption and incontinence, to which human flesh and blood are heir, overtook him he was hurled headlong down to perdition. This was the theme of the Bharata Samhita by the author Apantaratama. The supernatural inhabitant of each natural object was regarded as a god. The spirits of the departed were considered to be earthbound and they were worshipped and propitiated. This was the germ of ancestor worship.

The idea of rebirth and transmigration to lower and higher planes of Heaven and Hell, according to the deserts of individuals, was linked up with religion. Malevolent spirits were supposed to feed on the person distressed with misfortune and illness, and sacrifices were undertaken to loosen their hold on him. The old beliefs were being weakened under the influence of Hinduism, which sheltered within its portals monotheists, polytheists and pantheists. Religion commuted good conduct first and classification of society next. Hindus were not then judged by their social status. Many books have been published showing the striking comparison between the gods of Indo-Aryans and the deities worshipped by the Greeks and Romans. Efforts have been made from time to time by European scholars and Census Officers to determine and define just how to realise a genuine Hindu, in the popular acceptance of the term, but the majority of them failed miserably. They should have first realised that, inspite of so many cruel invasions of India by foreign races their attempt by force, or honours or bribes could not convert the country within so many thousands of years.

This is the true formula for realising the truth behind the Hindu religion. Two hundred millions of Hindus profess a religion which must necessarily differ in sects and creeds. The first progress of any religion is bound to be obscure and confused owing to the manifold mythological legends. In common with most other religions of the world, Hindu mythology contains ten incarnations of the God Vishnu. The Vedic triple forms of fire and gods, Fire, Sun and Indra, assumed the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, who were not single but were represented by their co-ordinate wives, carriers and distinct attributes of Creator, Preserver and Destroyer in Satwa, Raja and Tama.

Brahma, a human figure with four heads and arms, is the creator riding on a goose and his wife, the goddess of wisdom and arts, Saraswati, carries in her four hands Veda, a vessel, a beadstring, a spoon, standing on a lotus. There is no symbol of Brahma but he is worshipped mentally.

Vishnu, a human figure with four hands holding a club, a conch, a disc and a lotus, riding on the Garuda Bird, and his consort Lakshmi, seated on an owl, representing health, wealth, beauty and prosperity. Salgram Sila is the symbol in which he is worshipped as well as in the Image of His incarnation.

Siva, a hunter, with three eyes, trident in hand and human skull, covered with animal skins, with matted locks, fearful snakes circling round his shoulders against his blue neck, and his wife Durga, of ten arms carrying different arms, with magnificent crown, riding on a lion with her children Kartick and Ganesha.

Siva and Durga were worshipped together in their genital organs. representing creation as well as the cause of destruction by abuse. Durga is popularly known as Anna-Purna, tallying with the name of the Western mythology Anna Perenna and Sri or Lakshmi with Ceres. No reasonable term could be found as to the birth of the consorts of these gods. They were hid in mystery. They were given divine origin.

The society depicted in the Rig-Veda required the consent of a girl's guardian, either parents or elder brother, after the young couple had themselves come to an agreement. Such is the marriage contrast reflected in Ruru's marriage with Pramadbara in Poulama Parva. Many are the tales about the marriage of Siva and Durga and the birth of their children. The charge of incestuous marriage is levelled against the creator Brahma, service is ascribed to the wife of Vishnu and devotion to the wife of Siva. But it cannot be denied that Hindu marriage has been a Sacrament, and offering oblations in response to the soul of the ancestors has been a religious necessity. The inheritance is through females and legitimate sons. This has been recognised for a very long time. In the case of Brahma's marriage no question arose of inheritance like the Pharaoh who had to marry his sister to establish his right to the throne beyond all question. The charge of incestuous marriage against Brahma is a clear case of sarcasm by the satellites of the worshippers of the other gods. It is borne out in the Pancavimsa Brahmana:—

"The Hotr recites loudly the Four-hotr-formulas; he thereby holds the recitation following on the laud: (when the Hotr mentally has repeated the verses of the laud,

he recites by way of Sastra (each Stotra must be followed by a corresponding Sastra) the Catur-hotr-formulas. In the manuals of the Hotr these are given Sankh. X 14. 4 and Ait, Br. V. 25.3-13 Asv, VII 13. 9-10) for that is no laud which is not followed by a recitation. (13)."

"They abuse (The abusing of Prajapati consists according to Drahyayana (IX 4. 17-18) either in mentioning the evil deeds of Prajapati or in repeating the evil facts done by Prajapati as recorded by the Adhvaryus and the Rgvedins. Of the Rgvedins is known the tale of the incest of Prajapati (Ait. Br. III 33, cp. below VIII. 2.10. and Sat br. I.7.4. Apastamba XXI.) 12.3) cites several Prajapatiparivada, mantras, *e.g.*, yat stenan yad vrkan damsan masakau yad aghayavah tad u te vrjinam tv etad vratam etan na me matam). Prajapati; now that they have got hold of him, this (fact) is now (Probably (note the place occupied in the sentence by enam) tavad belongs to the preceding, not to apamainam) proclaimed by them (as they think;) 'we have got hold of him.' (14)."*

To a great extent it can be explained in the words of Professor Max Muller—

"Several centuries before Buddha, Visvamitra, who, like Buddha, was a member of the royal caste, had to struggle against the exclusiveness of the priests. At that early time, however, the position of the Brahmans was not yet impregnable; and Visvamitra, although a Kshatriya, succeeded in gaining for himself and his family the rights for which he struggled, and which the Brahmans had previously withheld from all but their own caste King Janaka of Videha again, whose story is given in the Brahmanas, refused to submit to the hierarchical pretensions of the Brahmans, and asserted his right of performing sacrifices without the intercession of priests." †

The growth and establishment of priesthood and formation of castes on the basis of the ability, power, training and culture of the different bodies of men pursuing different branches of profession and calling were very important. The hymns of Agastya, Vasistha, Visvamitra are as important as the philosophy of Kapila, Goutama and Vyasa. The genius of Brahmans, the rising power of Kshatriyas, creative faculties of Vaisyas and the wise submissive forbearance of Sudras produced a nation which became distinguished as the pioneer in all branches of learning, philosophy, astronomy, astrology, art, sculpture, trade, commerce, politics, science and religion. The Indo-Aryan policy succeeded in founding new kingdoms, dynasties and overcoming all difficulties in their way.

The labourers were imported and, with the growing civilisation, the happiness of life attracted the attention of the aborigines of the neighbouring countries, who invaded the peaceful countries and carried away food, drink and cattle. They were the invaders and not the Aryans, as Western scholars want to make the world believe for interested motives. Hindu authoritative works say that the Asuras, Danabas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Rakshasas, Devas and men were all sons of the same father

*Pancavimsa Brahmana, p. 66.

†Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," p. 80.

Kasyapa but by different wives only, and the fight between them was to possess heaven, the best place for happiness and enjoyment, and that they did not come from any different place or country. The ambitious men were called the Asuras and Danabas, Yakshas and Gandharvas were the accumulators of wealth and the masters of the fine arts of music, etc. When the Asuras and Danabas were subdued and in some cases annihilated, the conquerors were called the Devas and the vanquished the Danabas. The men, as allies of the conquerors who helped the just cause, were rewarded with the kingship and priesthood according to the military and spiritual services performed by them. It was for this that Brihaspati and Vasistha officiated for the gods, Kasyapa, Atri, Sambarta for men, Trishira for the Asuras followed Sukra. Agastya and Kapila did not descend to priesthood. Mandhata and Muchukunda fought with Devas, Rakshas and Kubera and were victorious kings.

It is admitted that Indians were the pioneers of the trade and commerce of the world. The finding of common words in the implements of agriculture proves that Aryan traders took them to the countries to which they travelled for trade and commerce and introduced them there with the original Aryan names. The Veda and Upanishad do not mention that the early Aryans lived naked in caves and among boughs or were a nomadic class of hunters. The word Arya owes its origin to the tilling of the ground. The Aryans built houses, rode horses, used roads and made boats and carts. They visited distant lands over seas and rivers for trade and commerce. They made bridges and excavated rivers and lakes for agriculture and the convenience of inland communication. It is said that the Rig Veda is the ancient record of world civilisation; but it does not give any picture of the life and society of Europe, Africa or America, but only of India. The names of the well-known authors of the Vedic hymns do not bear any resemblance. There is no similarity even in the mode of living, habits, customs or laws between Indians and any other nation of the world. The discoveries of Indian gods, etc., in America, Russia and many other parts of the world bear testimony to their migration and settlement there and the introduction of Phallic or Sun worship. Patriotic European scholars launched a great controversy to prove the seat of the primitive Aryans to have been somewhere other then India. One could have been convinced of all these theories if they could have proved the existence of the very old institution of sacrifices amongst any nations of Europe, Asia or Africa in their daily life, the idea of four stages of life, and attaining of success through due performance of duties. To found an Empire through public sacrifices like Raja-Suya or Asvamedha was to be found only in India.

There is no distinction made between Vyasas in the Mahabharata, yet it is held that Badarayana Vyasa and Krishna Dvaipayana were different men. There is no such mention made by any of the commentators of the Mahabharata. Hence that cannot be accepted. All that one finds is that the author Vyasa went to Vadarikasharama to compose the Mahabharata (Janmejoya asked him to do so to clear certain doubts raised in his mind) and clearly put in the Adi Parva Chapter LXII, which were answered in Janmejoya's Raja-Suya Yajna, described in Harivamsa. It was thus the king was convinced that the cause of the war of Kurukshettra was Raja-Suya Yajna and nothing else and several instances were quoted as examples. Onê important fact cannot be overlooked, that Bharata, the brother of Rama, forbade him to do Raja-Suya in the Uttarakanda Ramayana (Book VII, Canto 96). This also proves the time of the composition of the book in question.

However, the composition of the Mahabharata entirely rests on the answers to the questions put by king Janmejoya. The name of Vyasa had long been recognised as a general term of reciter of the holy book in India, and is used even now in the North-Western Provinces. Vyasa is also held to mean the divider of the Vedas and gains strong ground in the etymology of the word. There is a distinct mention of the son of the sage Parasara being distinguished as the divider of the Vedas. He was born in a family of Vasistha. In their family the Indian pontificate, full of great moral, legal and philosophical learning, had been handed down for the last few generations. Vyasa rendered invaluable services, being the first to make a compromise between the different sages, followers of different cults, by dividing the original Rig Veda in such a manner as would be helpful in the performance of the Hindu religious sacrifices. He used the ancient mythological and didactic accounts for the revision of law and introduction of reform in the custom of the country on a national basis.

Veda Vyasa and Valmiki, were both of them descended from the family of the well-known priests of India, Vasistha and Bhrigu, respectively. They belonged not only to the family of the priest but were connected with the kings of India. Vyasa was said to be the reviver of the line of the Kurus and Valmiki or Cyavan was that of Sarjati and Gadi. Agastya also married Lopamudra, the daughter of a king. They were all called Maitra Varuna. The reason of their being called thus may be ascertained from their connections with sacrifices, for one finds in the Pancavimsa Brahmana a distinct reference that sacrifice became the beau-ideal of religion and Prajapati, having changed himself into it, gave himself over to the gods.

" (The ajya-lauds.)

" Prajapati, having changed himself into the sacrifice gave himself over to the Gods. These did not agree together as to the precedence. He said to them : 'Run ye a race for it'. They ran a race (Ajim Ayan). Because they ran a race, therefore the Ajya-(lauds) are called ajyas (aj-ya). (1)" "Indra understood : 'Agni, forsooth, will win in the first place.' He said (to Agni) : 'whichever of us both shall win in the first place, shall share with the other.' Agni) was the first to win, thereon Mitra and Varuna, thereon Indra. Now, there was this one Hotr-function (still) to be won. Indra said to Agni : 'According to our agreement this one must be shared by us two.' This is the Hotr-function consecrated to Indra-Agni : One and a half (of the laud belongs to Agni, one and a half to Indra) (2)." "Four in number are they (the ajya-lauds) with six deities. (Agni, Mitra, Varuna, Indra and for the last stotra again Indra and Agni together (3)." "In six ways disposed (Saddhavihitah, cp. tridhavihitah ('tripartitus'). Probably we are to understand : the againstoma-catustoma (comprising three services), the ukthya. the sodasin and the atiratra.) is the sacrifice ; the whole of the sacrifice he thereby lays hold off. (4)." "All the ajya(-lauds) are svara i.e., provided with svarita : having at the end, as all gayatra-chants have a final ending on III/345, R. Simon, Puspasutra, page 525, in voce svara.); this is a sameness (Why the sameness, the Jamitvam, is unfruitful, is made clear by the following passage of the Jaim. br. (I 300) : 'Devoid of pairing and offspring is the sameness, just as when two men or two women were lying together, neither the two men would bring forth any child, nor the two women if they did not get a copulating partner. That, on the other side, which is devoid of sameness, is a copulation, a generation.' Moreover, the consequence of sameness is yatayamatvam !); they chant (verses) addressed to different deities : for the sake of taking away the sameness. (5).' "In view of the domestic animals they chant the ajya-(lauds) (Cp. VI. 8. 12.). They chant them constantly returning (Cp. VI 8. 9.) : therefore they (the animals, the cattle beget thitherward (Cp. VI. 8. 9.) and are born hitherward (The young ones, being born, come 'hitherward' out of the womb) therefore also they (the cows), having started to the (meadows), return (Cp. VI. 8. 13.) (6)."

(The midday-Pavamana-laud.)

' The midday-service is purified (this must mean : 'the midday-service is brought about ' or ' the midday, pavamana-laud is held '.) by the following. (1)."

" By three metres (Gayatri, brhati, tristubh, cp. Introduction to Arseyakalpa, page XXIV and Ait. br. III. 17. 4. satsu va atra gayatrisu stuvate satsu brhatisu tisrsu tristupsu.) and five samans (Gayatra. amahiyava, raurava, yaudhajaya and ausana.) (2) "

" By chanting the midday pavamana-(laud) i.e., the first laud (stotra) in the midday-service) they strain the midday-pressing. (3)".

"The (samans used) at the midday pavamana-(laud) are (equal to) all the samans*(of the whole midday-service) (4)." "(They are) the gayatra (saman), the saman with finale, the one devoid of finale, the one with ida as finale. (With finale (stanse is chanted the amahiyava (gramegeya XII, 2. 13) ; without finale proper the yaudhajaya (gram XIV. I. 36) and the ausana (gram XV. I. 32) with ida as finale the raurava (gram XIV. I. 35). In the same way the rathantara or hotub prsthastotra (aranyegeya II. I. 21) is chanted with finale (as) ; the vamadevya or Maitravarunasya prsthastotra (gram. V. I. 5) is chanted with ut finale (cf. V 2 4), likewise the

* Pancavimsa Brahmana, pp. 134—136.

naudhasa (gram. VI. I. 37) or brahmanah prathastotra is chanted without finale; the kaleya or acchavakasya prathastotrah (gram. VI 2 7) is chanted with ida as finale" (5)" "In chanting the midday-pavamana-(laud) they chant all the samans (of the midday service) (3)."*

The Indo-Aryan worship went abroad through Indian traders and was established in Egypt, Mesopotamia, etc. The origin of the Asuras could also be traced.

"At a later period, when we come to know more about Mitanni from the letters of one of its kings to two Egyptian Pharaohs, and the Winckler tablets from Boghaz-Koi, it is found that its military aristocracy spoke an Indo-European language, as is shown by the names of their kings—Saushatar, Artatama, Sutarna, Artashs umara, Tushratta, and Mattiuza They worshipped the following deities:

Mi-it-ra, Uru-w-na, In-da ra, and Na-sa-at ti-ia—

Mitra, Varuna, Indra, and Nasatyau the "Twin Aswins"=Castor and Pollux)—whose names have been deciphered by Winckler."...... ......"The Mittani tribe (the military aristocracy probably) was called "Kharri", and some philologists are of opinion that it is identical with "Arya", which was 'the normal designation in Vedic literature from the Rig Veda onwards of an Aryan of the three upper classes". (Vedic Index of Names and Subjects, Macdonald and Keith, vol. i, pp. 64-5 (London, 1912).

Mitanni signifies "the river lands," and the descendants of its inhabitants, who lived in Cappadocia, were called by the Greeks "Mattienoi". "They are possibly," says Dr. Haddon, "the ancestors of the modern Kurds", (The Wanderings of Peoples, p. 21) a conspicuously long-headed people, proverbial, like the Ancient Aryo-Indians and the Gauls, for their hospitality and their raiding propensities.

"It would appear that the Mitannian invasion of northern Mesopotamia and the Aryan invasion of India represented two streams of diverging migrations from a common cultural centre, and that the separate groups of wanderers mingled with other stocks with whom they came into contact Tribes of Aryan speech were associated with the Kassite invaders of Babylon, who took possession of northern Babylonia soon after the disastrous Hittite raid. It it believed that they came from the east through the highlands of Elam.

"For a period, the dating of which is uncertain, the Mitannians were overlords of part of Assyria, including Nineveh and even Asshur, as well as the district called "Musri" by the Assyrians, and part of Cappadocia. They also occupied the cities of Harran and Kadesh †"

Professor Max Muller has explained the meaning of the words Deva, Basu, etc., as mere general names of the agents in Nature.

"All these superhuman agents shared in common, they were emphatically called deva, bright, vasu, brilliant, asura, breathing or living, and many other names. We saw how this word Deva, meaning originally bright, was gradually divested of its purely physical meaning, and instead of meaning brilliant agents, came to mean in the end great and good, or what we now mean by divine agents. The history of that one word deva in Sanskrit, and *Deus* in Latin, disclosed, in fact, better than

*Pancavimsa Brahmana, p. 136

†Professor Donald A. Mackenzie's "Myths of Babylonia and Assyria," pp. 269-270.

anything else, one of the most important channels of the historical evolution of the concept of deity, at least among our own Aryan ancestors.

Highest Generalisation or Monotheism.

When that concept of deva had been realised, it was at first a generic concept. It applied, not to one power, but to many. Even when the human mind tried to combine the idea of supremacy and therefore of oneness with that of deity, this was done at first by predicating supremacy of single devas or gods only, each supreme in his own domain. After this stage, in which we find a number of single gods, neither co-ordinate nor subordinate, there follows the next in which all the single gods were combined into a kind of organic whole, one god being supreme, the others subject to him, but to him only, and standing among themselves on a certain level of equality. After these two stages, which I called Henotheism and Polytheism, follows in the end that of real Monotheism, a belief in one god, as excluding the very possibility of any other gods. We saw that this highest stage was not only reached by the most thoughtful and religious poets in Greece and Rome, but even by some of the Vedic poets in India. These stages in the development of the idea of the godhead are not therefore merely theoretical postulates. They are historical realities which we may watch in many religions if only we are enabled to follow their history in literary documents. Nowhere, however, can this be done more effectually than in India, where some fortunate accident has preserved to us in the Vedic hymns relics of the henotheistic stage in wonderful completeness Only we must not imagine, as some scholars seem to do, that the whole of the Veda belong to the worship of single gods. On the contrary, and this is what renders the Veda so valuable, we see in it all the three stages together, the henotheistic, the polytheistic, and the monotheistic, representing the different levels of religious thought that had been reached at that early time by different classes of the same society."*

*Professor Max Muller's "Collected Works," pp. 75-76.

EPIC INTER-RELATION WITH THE VEDAS.

The Bharata Samhita was composed as the medium of Vedic instruction for the intelligensia of the Hindu Aryan family of kings, priests and followers. The two great Indian Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, drew their inspiration from the Bharata Samhita but represented distinct changes in Aryan civilisation, in customs, manners, education and religion, according to their distinct propagation of the ideals of different cultural centres of India. Western scholars are annoyed and surprised at not finding a connected account of chronology and history amongst the advanced Indo-Aryan family in their literature, but they overlook one significant fact, that the Hindus have been the most conservative lovers of history and chronology and have preserved the link of their connection from the days of the creation in the daily offering of 'tarpan' or water to their departed ancestors and seers and in different forms of salutation. Dr. Hopkin's article on Hindu salutations is very interesting. He considers them extraordinary. He says, in the case of a traveller crossing the Ganges* or a mountain, this prayer is uttered by his superiors or well-wishers :—

"May king Varuna and Yama, winner of conflicts (an old epithet), and Ganges and Jamuna and the mountains give you weal, and the Maruts and Asvins and streams and lakes ; weal to you on the part of gods and demons and vasus ; O Ganges, daughter of the mountains, shepherd him gopayane 'nam, and give thy protection to this king who is about to penetrate into the mountains' (pravi-) viksato'sya sailan iman sailasute nrpasya); to which is cannily added to the traveller, 'take care of you self', yatto bhavasva. A benediction for a hero going into battle (7.94 41 f.) begins with invoking protection from Brahman and proceeds with a long list of potential aiders in a rather curious medley, namely. priests, the best serpents, sarisrpas, royal sages (enumerated by name, Yayati and others, acting as protecting saints), 'creatures with one foot, those with many feet and those, with no feet, apadakas, Svaha and Svadha and Saci and (Svasti kurvantu te sada; Lakshmi, Arundhati, Asita Devala, Visvamitra, Angirasa, Vasistha, Kasyapa, Dhatr Vidhatr lokesa, the Directions and their lords, digisvarah, the six-faced Kartikeya, Vivasvat, the four elephants of the quarters, earth, sky, and planets, and finally the great serpent that supports the earth, adhastad dharanim yo sau sada dharayate nrpa sesas ca pannagasresthah svasti tubhyam prayacchatu."

The invocation sloka seems to have been in the version of the Bharata Samhita of Kapila at the end of Chapter 269 Santi Parva (last verse), under the distinct colophon Gokapiliya :—" I bow to that

*The Parsis and Hindus make obeisance to rivers at sight or when crossing even now.

Brahma which is at one with him who knows him." The patriarch Bhisma thus salutes Visvarupa, and this is still followed and preserved in the daily worship of the Hindus in religious meditation as follows : O God ! Thou art the god of the Brahman, the benefactor of the Brahmanas and Cows (the wealth and preserver of sacrifices). These attributes are found in you, Sri Krishna and Gobinda." He has not forgotten to mention in that to bow down to Narayana, the sages and the form of Soma, who gratifies the Gods with nectar in the full-moon fortnight and the Pitris in the next fortnight. This Visvarup in the Mahabharata and Gita is not the creation of any new form of worship or the magic representation of Krishna.

In the Rig Veda Visvarupa Tvastra is mentioned as an authority on sacrifice. The difference in the views of Rig and Yajur Vedas about the death of this Tvastra at the hands of Indra for the possession of the cows is prominent. The older one *R/K* justifies Indra's action while the latter condemns it as killing a Brahman. It is held by learned Western scholars like Kasten Ronnow that the Devas very probably took over the Soma sacrifice from the Asuras. Tvastra is clearly in possession of Soma and in the Rig Veda he is nowhere described as a chaplain or purohit, though mentioned as an authority, but in Yajur texts he is. In Rig Veda II 23. 17th the famous priest of the Gods Brihaspati, is called a son of Tvastra, and both Sathapatha Brahmana and the Mahabharata describe how Tvastra flew into a rage over the murder of Visvarupa. It is said that Indra was very angry for Tvastra had married a female Asura. In Rig Veda it is mentioned that Tvastra and Indra are not on friendly terms although the former has got his proper share of the sacrifices. There might have been other causes of diference between them, but it seems from the description of the Mahabharata that the last conflict must have been connected with the ritual as it appears within the ritual as a god of fertility. In the Rig Veda verse III. 38,4, he appears in the shape of a bull styled Visvarupa. The creative activity of the primæval bull is mentioned in verse 5 and is well-known. The features of the bull Visvarupa resemble what is in the Parjanya hymn of the Rig Veda VII. 101, and d is 6a there. The learned Kasten Ronnow translates Rig Veda III 56.4a verse thus—" At the meeting (cohabitation) with them (the cows) he appeared as the leader." In c-d the description is continued thus : " The divine waters were in love with him, going separate ways they slipped away from him" (Cf. Geldner, R. V. Ubersetzung, i.363). To the female beings mentioned here belong the three "mermaids" in verse 5c : rtavarir yosanas tisro apyah, cf. also verse 2c. These are perhaps the triad Ila, Sarasvati, and Bharati, with whom we frequently meet ;

and it seems highly probable that they should be identical with the three dhisanah in Rig Veda, v. 69, to whom correspond the three prolific bulls, cf. verse 2 :—

iravatir varuna dhenavo vam madhumad vam sindhavo mitra duhre
trayas tasthur vrsabhasas tisrnam dhisananam retodha vi dyumantah.

Tvastra's activity generally consists in providing Heaven and Earth with rupa's. In Rig Veda, x.1109, the hotar isito yajiyan. *i.e.*, Agni, is asked to convey to the sacrificial enclosure the one (*i.e.*, Tvastra) who ime dyavaprthivi janitri rupair apimsad bhuvanani visva. Heaven and Earth, or both Rodasi, are here described as two prolific women (visvasya janayitryau), and the Rupa's are their offspring. Tvastra's special activity consists in creating them inside the womb; and Rig Veda, x. 184, describes, from a cosmic point of view, his activity amongst men and animals. The act of procreating has called into existence certain 'Sondergotter', cf. x. 184 1 :—

visnur youim kalpayatu tvasta rupani pimsatu
a sincatu prajapatir dhata garbham dadhatu te

and Tvastra is one of these gods. While, however, the activities of these other deities are quite obvious, his field of action is not quite clearly defined. Eggeling translates these words (in SBr. xiii 1, 8, 7) thus :—

'Tvastra, doubtless, is the fashioner of the couples of animals.'

Tvastra is credited as the creator of cattle as well as of rupa's, and it is interesting to observe the two aspects of his activity reflected in the real hero of the Mahabharata, Sri Krishna, in his well-known salutation verse as a benefactor of cows and Brahmans.

The prominent contending heroes were Tvastra and Indra, Kartabirjarjuna and Parasurama, and in the Bharata Samhita likewise Rama and Ravana, Bhisma and Parasurama, Drona and Drupada, whilst Krishna against Kamsa and Sisupala, Bhima against Jarasandhu, Bhisma, Drona and Karna against Arjuna, Salya against Yudhisthira, Bhima against Durjodhona appeared in the Epics. All of them represent a variety of characters of different ages. In the Ramayana Rama and Ravana were the chief heroes, but in its Uttarakanda Ravana was defeated by Kartabirjarjuna and Mandhata and was not killed at the instance of Pulasta, the progenitor of Ravana. Ravana was killed only when he expressed the wish to Narada to fight with Narayana. Rama was born and satisfied Ravana's ambition by killing him. Mandhata and Ravana were contemporaries and, after many generations, Rama descended from Mandhata. The fight between Rama and Ravana was due to the abduction of Sita. Likewise all the contents in the Mahabharata belong

to different generations. They were more or less for the possession of property. The fight between Parasurama and Bhisma was for the alleged injustice in the Svayambara marriage of Amba, the princess of Benares. In the Mahabharata these were the descriptions of the causes of the birth of Draupadi and Sikhandi to kill two great warriors Drona and Bhisma, who defeated Drupada and Parasurama. This proves that the Mahabharata and Uttarkanda Ramayana did not belong to one particular time, but the accounts of generations were strung together to prove the great question of rebirth and punishment. What personal valour and energy failed to accomplish was fulfilled by sacrifices and religious fervour.

The good works men or women once begin, by giving every moment to God, are not lost but will be taken up by others. They grow and expand in the eternity of time. The aim of the great Indian Epic may be expressed in the lines of Wordsworth :—

> " Blessings be with them and eternal praise,
> Who give us nobler loves and nobler cares :
> The poets who on earth have made us heirs
> Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays
> Oh might my name be numbered among theirs,
> Then gladly would I end my mortal days."

The Uttarakanda Ramayana begins with the installation ceremony of Rama after his great victory over Ravana. It was then that the celebrated sages from all parts of India went to congratulate the great hero on the victory he had achieved. The celebrated seven seers Attri, Bharadwaja, Visvamittra, Gautama, Jamadagni, Kasyapa and Vasistha hailed from the north, Agastya Bimukha, Namuchi, Pramuchi Sumukha and Svastyatreya from the south, Gargya, Galava, Kausika, Kanva, Yabacrita and son of Medhatithi from the east, Dhaumya, Kabarshi, Kouseya and Nrigangu from the west. They praised king Rama not so much for his victory over Ravana but for defeating his son Indrajit, who defeated the king of gods Indra. In this connection one very important fact is mentioned in the Uttarakanda (30th Canto) when Ravana took to task his preceptor Usana for worshipping Devas, including Indra, who were his enemies. The Uttarakanda laid stress on the event of the celebrated Madhu's marriage with Kumbhinashi, the sister of Ravana on his mother's side. So annoyed was he that he went to kill him, but a dramatic friendship was effected by Kumbhinashi. They were united by the force of this marriage, which came to be ratified by their joining in a fight against their enemies the Devas.

Nor can it be overlooked that the great Vedic sage Gautama cursed Indra for his forcible aggression on the body of the beautiful Ahalya.

Indra was defeated and taken prisoner for this curse and was called upon to share half of the similar sin which would thenceforward be perpetrated by others. Ahalya pleaded that she had been outraged by sheer force, for which she could not be held responsible. She was told that her sins would be expiated when she saw Rama in the wood, and if he would accept her hospitality. This marks the important age when ideas of chastity were considered to be affected by the touch of the person more than by thoughts in the mind, as it had been before. It was also mentioned that Daityas or demons were more powerful and prosperous than Devas. This was borne out in the Mahabharata too in connection with Agastya's prayer for gifts from the kings.

The Uttarakanda may be said to be a discourse between Rama and Agastya at the installation ceremony and not at any horse sacrifice he performed, whereas the Mahabharata and the Puranas were discussed between Sauti and Saunaka. Another important fact seems to be that Agastya described Narayana, appearing on the back of the famous bird Garuda and causing great havoc in the battle, and his censure by Mallyaban for transgressing the old established war rules of the Kshatriyas, which prohibited the killing of fleeing soldiers, which proved that he was not a Kshatriya (8th Canto). Agastya told Rama that the Demons he killed, like Ravana, were inferior in strength and energy to those killed by Narayana. Agastya describes Kapila as Nara (in 28th Canto, 68 verse).

The important clue seems to have been disclosed in canto 64 when Narada enlightened Ravana that Narayana worshippers lived in the White Island or the snowy range of the Himalaya, the abode of gods, and those who were killed by Narayana went to Heaven. Ravana pondered a little and decided to fight with Narayana. What is described in the Poulama Parva in the Mahabharata seems to have been explained in the Uttarakanda in the version of Durbasha. It was said Bhrigu cursed the god, for his act in killing his wife for giving shelter to the Daitayas after their flight from the battle-field. The curse was the real genesis of the Ramayana, which is in the Uttarakanda and nowhere else. Besides this, there was good ground to think that the Uttarakanda actually formed part of the Bharata Samhita. The vague version of the Poulama Parva was the work of time, due to misrepresentation or the unfaithful memory of the reciters. The Uttarakanda can never be the sequel to the Ramayana.

The most important connection between the two great Indian Epics is seen in the Narayana cult. The great hero Rama * was released by Binata's son Garuda from the grasp of the serpents, who were

*69 Canto 20 verse.

described as the children of Kadru. The Astika Parva of the Mahabharata gave the account of these serpents and the reputed powerful Garuda. Furthermore, the famous sloka (the first verse) the author of the Ramayana uttered, refers unmistakably to Yadu, the son of Yajati, in the account of the Uttarakanda*

"No fame be thine for endless time,
Because, base outcast, of thy crime,
Whose cruel hand was fain to slay
One of this gentle pair at play".

It is said that through exiled Yadu's promiscuous gallantry in the forest Krouncha many Demons were born. Yajati and Yadu belong to the Mahabharata and the Bharata Samhita and not to the Ramayana. The author of the Ramayana, in spite of all his efforts to make the Ramayana an independent book about the Solar kings of Ayodhya, failed to obliterate the close link and connection and common origin of the two great Epics in the Bharata Samhita. In the Ramayana the subject-matter of Bharata Samhita, *viz.*, Britta's fight, was also described. The genealogy of the Ikshaku in the Ramayana contains the names of Nahusa and Yajati. All these establish beyond doubt that the Bharata Samhita is the connecting link and the source of the two great Epics. The Bharata Samhita is found in the Uttarakanda Ramayana and the Mahabharata and Puranas. Kasyapa's children by his wives Diti and Aditi, Kadru and Binata, were the light and shade or the contending heroes of the two Epics. The Devas and Daityas were the sons of Diti and Aditi and the Danabas were born by another wife Dana. Kasyapa is the great progenitor of the contending parties and conflicting interests of the earth below and heaven above.

Kasyapa, Gautama, Vasistha and Agastya were the Vedic sages and were the founders of Vedic sacrifices. Their names were respected and handed down to posterity with the performance of religious rites they established in the daily and periodical woiship of the Hindus in Aryabarta or India. Eventually their names were perpetuated in the early system of Gotras. The Vedas testify to it, for certain older hymns were distinguished with the single name of the composer whereas those by pupils and descendants of the great progenitor are mentioned in the plural.†

The Epics were connected with Vedic legends and sages and were written in the style of discourses between the contemporary men,

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*Ramayana VI. 70 Canto, 38 verse.
†Prof. Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition" p. 186, 318 cf.

between elders and their decendants or pupils, instead of being written as a history on modern lines. These were then called Gathas and Gita. The Gathas were perhaps in prose and Gita in verse. Consequently they cannot be the composition of one author. The man who made the arrangement was called a Vyasa or editor. But when they came to be adapted in verse to help the reciters to remember them easily, they were done in the monasteries of teachers and of priests in such a way as to help them in the performance of the sacrifices. The true implication of the dispute in the Astika Parva between the sons of Kasyapa over the question of the true colour of the hair in the horse's tail which came out in the churning of the ocean, was the fight over the performance of sacrifices under white or black Yajurveda The horse is clearly referred to as fire or sacrifice in the Paushya Parva in the discourse between Utamka and his preceptor.

The complaint of a dog being beaten without any cause was common in the Paushya Parva and Uttarakanda, but the striking difference lay in the curses. In Paushya Parva it is pronounced by the mother of the dog to a king, whereas in the Uttarakanda Rama pronounced his decision in terms of the complainant dog, who was undergoing the punishment of transgression of the past life of a Kulapati and worshipper of idols at Benares under the Pasupat cult. The implication is clear; the system of religious propagation under the system of Kulapati Saunaka was not productive of good results but had been increasing vanity, pedantry and idolatory, which do not send a man to heaven but to hell. At the fiat of the sentence declared by Rama, the whole assembly was surprised, but when it was explained by the complainant dog by reciting the story of its former life, the people realised that any sudden rise in the station of life was productive of bad results in the end In ancient India there was one word which became all important, and it was sacrifice. At the high altar of sacrifice rose Brahma, the real creator of the earthly, moral and spiritual world.

These are clear Vedic references as to the origin of the Epics and their inter-relation, and give a clue to the claims of distinct authorship of the two Epics. It was solely composed for sacrifices and the maintenance of priestly power. Vasisthas were the priests of the Bharatas and the Bharata Samhita was enlarged and improved by them, and Vyasa, the son of Parasara, came to be regarded as the distinguished author. The Epic Ramayana belonged to the family of Bhrigus and relates the deeds of their disciples Ravana and Rama. How Rama was a follower of Bhrigu requires elucidation. Visvamitra effected the marriage of Rama and officiated on behalf of Janaka, and Vasistha on behalf of Rama as a family priest. The Uttarakanda described the ill-feeling between

Nimi and Vasistha on the question of priesthood. Vasistha was the priest of the Solar line of Ikshakus. Nimi did not wait for Vasistha's return, as requested by him, for he was prevented from undertaking the sacrifice by previous engagement by the Devas. Nimi engaged Gautama to perform his sacrifice and Vasistha was not only annoyed when he came to know of it but cursed Nimi. Nimi was equally competent to curse Vasistha. Vasistha's rebirth in Mitra Baruna through sacrifice took place in the same way as it did with Nimi through the good offices of Bhrigu. The Vedic hymn and the Satapatha-Brahmana testify that in a fight between the Devas and Daityas the slain were brought back to life:—

"There is the arista (-saman) (22)". "The Gods and the Asuras were contending, whom they slew of the gods, that one did not come to life again, whom (they slew) of the Asurās, that one came to life again. The gods performed (austerities; they saw that arista (-saman); thereupon whom they slew of the gods, that one came to life again, whom of the Asuras, that one did not come to life again (A similar legend of the reviving of the slain gods is found in Sat. Br. II. 6. 1. 1; atha yan evasam tas nint samgrame 'ghnams tan pitryajnena samairayanta). (Because they now thought), "we have through this (saman) come out unharmed" (narisama) therefore it is called arista ('free from harm'). The arista is applied at the end (of the arbhava; pavamana; laud) in order to be free from harm. (23)".*

The Uttarakanda Ramayana and the Mahabharata follow this Vedic idea of religious resurrection. The name of Nimi was identified with Naimisharanya, the most sacred place of Ancient India, being the centre of the practical Vedic teaching institution of Bhrigu. Bhrigu, the greatest ancient political seer, first conceived the idea of becoming the leader of religious thought in India on the line of decentralisation. Vyasa, the most conspicuous in the line of Vasistha, made Badrinarayan and Benares the centres of Vasistha's institution, which became two of the greatest shrines of India. The two great Indian Epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata of the two distinct centres—naturally became a heterogenous mass of contradiction and mysticism at the hands of different editors of different times who adorned the two different centres of the Pasupat and Narayan cults of the past.

A peculiarity ascribed to the Vasisthas appears in Karma-pradipa, a supplement of the Gobhila Sutras, that they exclude meat from their sacrifices. It proves conclusively that the Vasisthas are the authors of the Mahabharata, which begins with the story of Uparichara, who was made to conform to the rules of sacrifices without meat. Besides, the 1st Adhyaya of the Vasishtha Smriti declares Narayana is a deity of Brahmins and Rudra that of the Sudras.

Professor Max Muller says that to illustrate the sacrificial system and the duties of three or four classes of priests engaged at the great

*Pancavimsa Brahmana p. 284, paras, 22 and 23.

sacrifices an arrangement was come to and finally agreed upon long before the different Brahmans were composed. He further states that the division of priests and the general order of sacrifices must have been settled before the composition of the Samhitas of Sama and Yajur Vedas, for both follow the established order of sacrifices. These Samhitas are no more than mere collections of verses meant for the second and third classes of priests—Chhandogas and Adhvaryus. It seems that the Bharata Samhita was originally a manual book of great sacrifices with the important decision of worshipping the accredited god of the age, Narayana.

The family of Angirasa—Utathya, Brihaspati and Sambartha—were famous priests of Devas and kings of India. Their descendant Bharadwaja played a very important part in both the Epics.

The Asuras, enemies of Brihaspati, gave currency to the fictitious story of incestuous connection of Brihaspati with his elder brother's wife Mamotha. This was set at rest by the explanation given by the exalted Markendeya of the family of the priest of Asuras in Bana Parva.

The great Angira and Brihaspati were ancient law-givers and in Manu one finds the position of women and their expiation mantra for incestuous sin in Chapter IX.

"The purificatory rites of women are (*i.e.*, must be performed) without the Vedic Mantras; this is the decision of the law code. And for this disqualification of Mantra-less-ness, women are like unto inorganic things. This is the conclusion. (18)". "The proneness of women to infidelity has been largely sung in the Vedas and Nigamas. Now hear what has been said in the Vedas regarding the expiation of their incestuous sin. (19)" "Inasmuch as my mother, faithless to her lord, used to stroll about in quest of other men's (embraces) may my father purify her ovum, defiled by her incests with others. This (Mantra of the Veda) serves as an illustration (of what has been said in the preceding couplet) (20) *"

The law-givers lowered the position of women and accused them of infidelity, which must have created a large number of enemies and the crimes they tried to put down were thrown on their own shoulders, *i.e.*, that they were guilty of them. Marriage reform took place in the course of time. It is a palpable mistake to imagine that everything is ideal from its very creation. The incredible things are the pure mechanism of the brute creation, or passive obedience to, or the infallibility of, priests or Popes. Everyone feels that his opinion is right and correct, but if he is open to conviction it is alright. But if, instead of changing his wrong views, he is bent upon persisting, then dispute arises. It was thus that the creator Brahma and the law-giver

*** Manu Sambita, Chapter IX, p. 317, verses 18—20.**

Brihaspati were unjustly accused of the crimes they were trying to punish and repress by law.

The kings, their priests and philosophers were at first working together to make the religion of the Hindus popular by sacrifices, symbols, mythology and allegorical interpretations. Necessarily, like the genesis of the Old Testament, the oldest Hindu records contain accounts of the discourses of gods, sages and kings of yore. Learned men have found that language, writing and religion have come one after the other, or simultaneously. The separate spirit by the system of metaphors is represented in Garuda. The people of Ancient Egypt,* with whom the Indians were in close touch, were familiar with it. In their hieroglyphics the figures of Garuda, etc., are found. They knew and believed in the symbols of divine life and transmigration. It is said that the soul flies away, caught in the claws of the divine bird Garuda.

In the birth of societies the chiefs of the states contribute as much by special traits in their character as their priests, and these afterwards come to be regarded as attributes of virtue. Society is the union of men and its figure is made up of such examples as will live for ages. The life of societies and states is like that of a man. A man has the right to kill in self-defence; so a nation has full justification to wage war for its very existence when that is threatened. This is the law of Ancient India and was the cause of the fights in Vedic days. The king then rewarded the real merit of his priests and subjects. It was for this that the Vedic hymns were not confined to the exclusive authorship of the Brahmans, and became an appellation for a just king. Indra was the name of such a king.

Under Monarchical Government, where no attempts have been made to disgrace or humble the nature of a man, there can be no slavery. This was the ideal of the Ancient Hindu Government in India under a king. Taxation was light in comparison with Constitutional Government, where everyone wants to be on the same level of life and enjoyment. The manners of a king or a prince conduce as much to the question of liberty or law. The Vedic kings and princes affect no distinction, mix with their people, dress like them, worship with them in public sacrifices, make their priests enlighten them on the points of law, usage and religion and take part with them in the pastimes of hunting, etc. The people then forgot the king's weaknesses and loved him dearly as their own kith and kin. But when the caste system divided the orders of the people, then the people began to mind class

* (Horapolls 1. 7.)

interests. It is not fortune which rules the world. Neither the blows of the forks of a sage, nor the lash of a king can make a man change his natural inclination. When men began to follow distinct lines of action and profession they could no longer be deceived as to their own class-interests, as they were being developed with distinct inclinations. No sooner had they realised their position, than they found themselves duped. The universe is ruled by the laws of Nature and change is made by volcanoes, floods, storms, etc., so there are more than general causes, material, moral and spiritual, which influence revolution in society. In such a revolution the ancient Hindu monarchs were made to live under the fundamental laws of their state, so that they might not be despotic, like Vena. Then they had nothing to regulate the hearts of the people or their own. The world became more and more artificial and stereotyped.

In time the system of Monarchical Government was corrupted, and the marks of the highest slavery were reflected in the high dignitaries of the king and priests and made them the vile instruments of arbitiary powers, covering their sins and shame with all sorts of dignity of offices, spells of sacrifices, riches and entertaining the public to all sorts of amusements and magic. Besides, the true strength of a king does not lie so much in his valour, skill at arms and possession of a vast army or his ability to conquer the powerful neighbouring kings, as in the art of preserving and increasing wealth in the kingdom and in the wisdom of consolidating the unity of his subjects as one national unit. A Democratic Government is ruined by the luxurious habits of the general public, while monarchy meets its doom by poverty.

It was for this the Bharata Samhita mentions that the Vedic kings Srutoroba, etc., showed their incomes when the sage Agastya approached them for gifts. The great Agastya at last took them to an Asura King, whom he not only made give what Agastya wanted, but disgorge the major portion of the wealth he had amassed by an orthodox mode of life and policy. The word Dasyu or robbery seems to have been the origin of the word Dasa. The Dasyu was made a Dasa by Agastya. What Agastya did his contemporary, the Vedic Bharata king Nahusa, also accomplished. Dr. Winternitz says:—

"The legend of Nahusa, the father of Yayati, which is related in the Mahabharata several times, is also a kind of Tital legend. which ends with a fall from heaven: Nahusa, a grandson of the Pururavas of Vedic fame, was a mighty king, who annihilated the robber bands (dasyusamghatan). But he levied taxes on the rishis, too, and commanded them to carry him on their backs, like beasts of burden. He even overpowered the gods, and ruled the Heavens for a long time in Indra's stead. He desired Indra's wife Saci as his wife, and grew so overbearing that he yoked the divine rishis to his chariot, treading on Agastya's head. Now this was a bit too much for this

great Saint, and he cursed Nahusa, with the consequence that he fell from heaven and was obliged to live on the earth as a snake for ten thousand years."*

This proves that Dasyus were Asuras first and slaves or dasas afterwards. Dasyus or Asuras saw clearly that their unexpected fortunes by robbery did not last nor were they works of merit. They saw the power of men like Nahusa and Kubalassa and were fully convinced of the advantages derived from virtue and sacrifice. They practised these from interested motives and the 'Pancavimsa Brahmana' testifies to it:—

"With the Asuras (once) was the whole sacrifice. The Gods saw the yajnayajniya. By means of (the words): "by sacrifice on sacrifice in honour of Agni" they took from them the agnihotra (by the words) 'and by hymn on hymn in honour of the skilful', the full—and new moon sacrifices; (by the words), 'continually we (will extol) the immortal Jatavedas', the seasonal sacrifices; and by (the words) 'as a dear friend I will extol', the sacrifice of Soma". (5). "At that time the metres (the verse quarters of it) were; 'By sacrifice in honour of Agni; by hymn in honour of the skilful; we (will extol) the immortal Jatavedas; as a dear friend I will extol'. Now, the gods by means of the verses, repeating each time the beginning, (the first word of each verse quarter), took the sacrifice away from the Asuras". (6) †

The priests claimed a monopoly of all knowledge, divine and earthly. They appropriated it to play upon the imagination of the contending parties by a sort of compromise. The Naga worshippers found their adorning creature and the intelligent found the meditative god resting in peace over it. This is the true emblem of submission and peace : a true religion makes what the bloodshed of war cannot accomplish. A plain record of facts and deeds would have given just cause for continuing the fight and ill feeling between the different parties. Fiction and mythology in the history of nations were introduced for the purpose of satisfying the educated and the illiterate mass, in order to convey to each what each wanted, according to their respective angles of vision and their respective culture, knowledge and belief. Vyasa and Valmiki fulfilled the task with which they were entrusted and their names have been handed down to posterity with great reverence. They developed a marvellous craving for fiction and mythology in the peaceful growth of Indian civilisation, which was copied by other nations with whom they came in contact.

Indian astrology, astronomy and medicine were studied, and demonstrated the skill and power of the priests and sages. The Hindus believe in the influence of planets over the fortunes of men, and the seven days of the week were named after them. The names of the discovers of these planets are, perhaps, recorded in their names, but one cannot overlook one important fact, that the sun and the moon are

* Dr. Winternitz's "A History of Indian Literature," Vol. I, p. 381.

† "Pancavimsa Brahmana.," p. 176, verses 5 and 6.

included in them, and the number of the planets are the same with the digits of nine. The nine astronomical treaties were called Siddhantas. In the Yajur Veda and Brahmans occur expressions—Nakshatra-darsa and Ganaka, the observers of the heavens as astrologers and astronomers. The invention of algebra and the first astronomical ideas owed their origin to Ancient India.

Vyasa and Valmiki were not concerned with these, though their ancestors were celebrated masters. Vasistha and Parasara, from whom Vyasa was descended, were the authors of two astronomical treatises. Bhrigu's name as the greatest astrologer still lives in his monumental astrological work called Bhrigu Samhita. About the sage Saunaka, with whom the current Mahabharata is so much concerned, even the learned Max Muller expressed his confusion in the clearest manner possible :—

"The story of Saunahotra, the son of Suaahotra, and grandson of Bharadwaja, being born again as Gritsamada-Saunaka, may have some historical foundation, and the only way in which it can be interpreted; is, that the second Mandala, being originally seen by Gritsamada, of the family of Bhrigu, was afterwards preserved by Saunahotra, a descendant of Bharadwaja, of the race of Angiras, who entered the family of Bhrigu, took the name of Saunaka, and added one hymn, the twelth, in praise of Indra. This is partly confirmed by Katyayana's Anukramani, and by the Rishyanukramani of Saunaka. It would by no means follow that Saunaka was the author of the hymns of the second Mandala. The hymns of that Mandala belong to Gritsamada of the Bhrigu race. But Saunaka may have adopted that Mandala, and by adding one hymn, may have been said to have made it his own. Again, it does not concern us at present whether Saunaka, the author of the Kalpasutra, was the same as Saunaka, the chief of the sages in the Naimishiya Forest, to whom during the great twelve years' sacrifice, Ugrasravas related the Mahabharata, and who became the teacher of Satanika, the son of Janmejoya. If this identity could be established, a most important link would be gained, connecting Saunaka and his literary activity with another period of Indian literature. This point must be reserved for further consideration"*.

The learned Pargiter says :—

"The fable about Vasistha and Agastya is very ancient, because it was current when hymn vii 33 was composed in or soon after the reign of Sudas. The Jatukarnyas were a Vasistha Gotra. This name is a patronymic, and so there were several of the name. Jatukarna or a Jatukarnya is said to have taught Vyasa the Veda (Va. 1-14. Hv. 42. 2364. Vedic literature says Vyasa was a disciple of Visvaksena, Vedic Index, ii, 339. The two may be the same) and the Purana, and is described as Vyasa's predecessor as regards the Veda. There were other Jatukarnyas later"†

Agastya left no family, no Gotra, or there can be no two Agastyas in the two Epics. He is one of the ancient sages of whom the gods sought assistance, not to perform their Vedic sacrifices but to perform wonderful acts that neither they themselves nor anybody else could do.

*Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pp. 232-233.
† Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," pp. 216 and 217.

He became famous by swallowing the ocean dry at the request of the Devas, so that the Asuras could not hide there in any form. He digested Batapi, the brother of the Asura king Ilval, and the practice of killing kings and robbing their wealth was discontinued. This can be inferred from the trend of the story in the Mahabharata and the distribution of wealth to the kings who accompanied the great sage Agastya. In the Ramayana, Rama went to the hermitage of Agastya and killed Ravana with the celestial weapon with which he was invested. No one else but Agastya knew this deadly weapon of Narayana.

"The arrow, Saint Agastya gave
And blessed the chieftain's life to save:
That dart the Eternal Father made.
The Monarch of the Gods to aid;
By Brahma's self on him bestowed
When forth to fight Lord Indra rode.
* * * * *
He laid it on the twisted cord,
He turned the point at Lanka's Lord.
And swift the limb-dividing dart
Pierced the huge chest and cleft the heart
And dead he fell upon the plain
Like Vritra by the Thunderer slain,
The Rakshas host when Ravan fell
Sent forth a wild terrific yell,
Then turned and fled, all hope resigned,
Through Lanka's gates, nor looked behind
His voice each joyous Vanar raised,
And Rama, conquering Ravana, praised".*

The Asuras practised all sorts of illusion and it was sage Agastya who first found a means to set them at naught by his psychic power, knowledge of science and religious austerities. It might be that he was instrumental in the origin of the Atharva Veda. Professor A. A. Macdonell says:—

"The adherents of the three sacrificial Vedas would thus naturally recognise a work which was a repository of witchcraft. Thus the Satapatha Brahmana, though characterising Yatu or sorcery as devilish—doubtless because it may be dangerous to those who practice it—places yatuvidah or sorcerers by the side of bahvrichas or men skilled in Rig Vedic verses. Just as the Rig Veda contains very few hymns directly connected with the practice of sorcery, so the Atharva originally included only matters incidential and subsidiary to the sacrificial ritual... .... In the Mahabharata we find the importance and the canonical character of the Atharva fully recognised. The four Vedas are often mentioned, the gods Brahma and Vishnu being in several passages described as having created them. The Atharva is here often also referred to alone, and spoken of with approbation. Its practices

* "The Ramayana of Valmiki" by Professor Ralph T. H. Griffith, page 491, Canto CX.

are well-known and seldom criticised adversely, magic and sorcery being, as a rule, regarded as good'.*

The Vedic implication of Brihaspati by Professor A. A. Macdonell is very interesting. He says:—

"A deity of an abstract character occurring in the oldest as well as the latest parts of the Rig Veda is Brihaspati, 'Lord of Prayer'."

Roth and other distinguished Vedic scholars regard him as a direct personification of devotion. In the opinion of the present writer, however, he is only an indirect deification of the sacrificial activity of Agni, a god with whom he has undoubtedly much in common. Thus the most prominent feature of his character is his priesthood. Like Agni, he has been drawn into and has obtained a firm footing in the Indra myth. Thus he is often described as driving out the cows after vanquishing the demon Vala. As the divine Brahma priest, Brihaspati seems to have been the prototype of the god Brahma, chief of the later Hindu trinity. But the name Brihaspati itself survived in post-Vedic mythology as the designation of a sage, the teacher of the gods, and regent of the planet Jupiter.

Another abstraction, and one of a very peculiar kind, is the goddess Aditi. Though not the subject of any separate hymn, she is often incidentally celebrated. She has two, and only two, prominent characteristics. She is, in the first place, the mother of the small group of gods called Adityas, of whom Varuna is the chief. Secondly, she has, like her son Varuna, the power of releasing from the bonds of physical suffering and moral guilt. With the latter trait her name, which means 'Unbinding,' 'Freedom,' is clearly connected. The unpersonified sense seems to survive in a few passages of the Rig Veda. Thus a poet prays for the 'secure and unlimited gift of Aditi'. The origin of the abstraction is probably to be explained as follows. The expression 'sons of Aditi', which is several times applied to the Adityas, when first used in all likelihood meant 'sons of liberation', to emphasise a salient trait of their character, according to a turn of language common in the Rig Veda. The feminine word 'liberation' (Aditi) used in this connection would then have become personified by a process which has more than one parallel in Sanskrit. Thus Aditi, a goddess of Indian origin, is historically younger than some at least of her sons, who can be traced back to a pre-Indian age.

"Goddesses, as a whole, occupy a very subordinate position in Vedic belief. They play hardly any part as rulers of the world. The only one of any consequence is Ushas. The next in importance, Sarasvati, ranks only with the least prominent

* "A History of Sanskrit Literature" by Professor A. A. Macdonell, pp. 191-2 and 193-4.

of the male gods. One of the few, besides Prithivi, to whom an entire hymn is addressed, is Ratri, Night."*

The mythological phase presented by the Rig Veda is comparatively primitive, when the fire god is called a slayer of the Demon Vritra, associated with Indra. In the Rig Veda v.3.1, the following invocation appears:—

"Thou at thy birth, O' Agni, art Varuna; when kindled thou becomest Mitra; in thee, O' son of Might, all gods are centred; thou art Indra to the worshipper."†

In the Brahmans it is found that the sacrifice is said to have not only controlled the Vedic gods but also the processes of Nature. In the myths of the Yajur Veda, the Demons appeared as a group of evil beings of Asuras with the Apsaras, a class of celestial nymphs, with all the charms of female beauty to make sages give up asceticism and accept priesthood. It is found that the formulas of Yajur Vedas were not mere forms of prayer to gods, but consisted of statements of results of employing particular rites and Mantras. The Atharva Veda betrays no such regard for sacrificial punctuality and punctiliousness like the Rig Veda, but contains incantations and formulas, sorcery to overthrow enemies, to drive away diseases with the discovery of sciences, of medicines and astrology, etc., so very necessary for suffering humanity. Naturally the older and conservative sections had a certain amount of prejudice against it.

The learned Pargiter has found out one significant fact. As a judge, what one cannot lose sight of is that the

"historical tradition in the Vedic literature has one great merit over that in the Epics and Puranas, namely that the literature has been carefully preserved and what it contains now is what it contained when it was composed, so that its statements are statements of that time."‡

Neither Vyasa nor Valmiki was of the Vedic age, nor were their names mentioned in any of the Vedas. They could not have been, as they belonged to later ages. But his views and findings cannot appeal to reason. He says if Vyasa divided the Vedas there must have been some mention of it somewhere as an arranger, and gives the excuse that this was not done with the purpose of not disturbing the universal faith of the Hindus that the Vedas were not made by anyone but by God himself. This would have been alright if the hymns did not contain the names of the authors and to whom they were addressed. One must give him due credit for correcting his erroneous views when he says:—

"What Vyasa did seems to have been this. The statement that he arranged and divided the four-pada Veda into four suggests, (1) that, though rc, saman, and

*Professor A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," pp. 102, 103.
†Professor A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," p. 70.
‡Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," Cf. P. 12—14.

probably Yajus and Atharvan were distinguished before as shown above, yet they had not been treated distinctly, all co-existed as four padas in one general Veda, and he definitely separated them and constituted them respectively as four distinct Vedas: or (2) that, at any rate, he expressly and formally fixed the four-fold division and completed the canon of each Veda in definite shape, which became final subject to small modifications afterwards. He had four disciples and entrusted to each of them one Veda, *viz.*, the Rig Veda to Paila, the Yajur Veda to Vaisampayana, the Sama Veda to Jaimini and the Atharva Veda to Sumantu. The priestly literature has suppressed all this just as it has ignored Vyasa, for something of this sort must have taken place on any theory of the compilation of the four Vedas".*

Vyasa preserved his name in his disciples, whom in those days preceptors left as living monuments. The preceptor destroyed his own writing for the fame of his disciple; Saunaka did so and Asvalayana came into prominence.† Besides, Vyasa found his work, the Mahabharata, was regarded as the fifth Veda and attracted greater attention from the public, and for that reason he did not like to depreciate its value by making hymns in the Veda or giving out his name as a mere arranger. When Vyasa and Valmiki were born it was an age of philosophy and not of hymns. It was for this the guardians Adhipati of the four Vedas—Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva—were Brihaspati, Sukra, Mangal and Budha, respectively.

Vyasa Badarayan of Brahma Sutras dealt with the doctrines of Vedanta philosophy and was the best and oldest commentator of Yoga philosophy. From the philosophy of Samkhya all the six philosophies of Ancient India grew. Mimamsa is merely the development of the theory of dispute, the vehicle of the senses in the eternity of words and sound, whereas Naya of Goutama is only the complement of the Vaiseshiki system of philosophy. The Mahabharata illustrates the Yoga, Samkhya and Vedanta philosophies by examples. A calf finds its mother out of a thousand cows, so previous deeds follow their doers. Fate without action accomplishes no good result, like a seed thrown outside the tilled land seldom bears fruit, and so forth. Atharva Veda gives the origin of the world on the eternal principle, and Yajur Veda is full of cosmoganic legends proving that, through sacrifices and fire, the world was produced. All these theories and stories are in the Mahabharata and the Uttarakanda Ramayana. But the Ramayana up to the sixth book is a regular artificial Epic with the practices of ceremonies under Atharva Veda.

*Professor F. E. Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," p. 320.

†Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," p. 233.

* The Saint, well read in Holy Lore,
Pondered awhile his answer o'er.
And thus again addressed the king,
His wondering thoughts regathering:
'Another rite will I begin
Which shall the sons thou cravest win,
Where all things shall be duly sped
And first Atharva texts be read.'
Then by Vibhandak's gentle son
Was that high sacrifice begun,
The king's advantage seeking still
And zealous to perform his will,
Now all the Gods had gathered there,
Each one for his allotted share;
Brahma, the ruler of the sky,
Sthanu, Narayan, Lord most high,
And holy Indra men might view
With Maruts † for his retinue;
The Heavenly Chorister, and Saint,
And spirit pure from earthly taint,
With one accord had sought the place
The high-souled monarch's rite to grace.
‡When thus the suppliant Gods had prayed,
His wise reply Narayan made;
'What task demands my presence there,
And whence this dread, ye Gods declare.'

Vasistha was a great priest of the Ikshaku family and no ground was given for bringing Rishyasringa, son of Vibhandaka Kasyapa, from the Court of the Anga kingdom. There is a mention of Vasistha's performing sacrifices for this Deva in the Uttarakhanda, but he was present at the sacrifice under the leadership of Rishyasringa, who in fact was Dasaratha's son-in-law. Lomapada, king of Anga, adopted the daughter of Dasaratha, and Rishyasringa was led astray by the said king, through the services of beautiful girls, to marry the said adopted daughter Shanta as a fee for a sacrifice performed for making his country and people prosperous. The family of Kasyapa it seems, lived in lower Bengal and finally went to Anga. The Mahabharata identifies one family with the Nagas or serpents, and Bengal might be called their home. On its border lies the country called Chota Nagpur, whose origin in tradition connects it with the Epic.

"Raja Janmejoya had declared war against the entire race of the serpents, one of whom, Pundarika Nag by name, managed to escape, and having assumed a human

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*Prof. Ralph T. H. Griffith's "The Ramayan of Valmiki," Page 25, Canto XIV.

†The Maruts are the winds, deified in the religion of the Veda like other mighty powers and phenomena of nature.

‡Prof. Ralph T. H. Griffith's "The Ramayan of Valmiki," Page 26, Canto XIV.

form, travelled to Benares, and there succeeded in winning the hand of Parvati, the beautiful daughter of a Brahman Notwithstanding his otherwise human appearance, Pundarika could not get rid of the serpent's forked tongue, which roused the curiosity of his spouse. In order to divert her mind from this subject he took her on a pilgrimage to the holy temple of Jagannath at Puri On their way back they passed through Jharkand, as Chota Nagpur, then in the occupation of the Mundas, was called Near the hill of Sutiambe, Parvati was seized with the pangs of child birth, and importuned her husband to divulge the secret of his forked tongue. He disclosed to her his real identity, and disappeared in his proper form into a pool of water close by Immediately after the birth of her child, Parvati, in great remorse at the consequences of her curiosity, committed Sati. Later a Brahman passed that way, carrying an idol of Surya Devata, the Sun God, and stopped to drink at the pool, placing the idol on the brink. When about to resume his journey, he found that the idol could not be moved On looking about him, he saw to his astonishment a hu e cobra protecting with its expanded hood a little naked child.' The serpent revealed himself to the Brahman as Pundarika Nag, and narrated his strange history. He prophesied that the child was destined to rule the country, and directed that he was to be named Phani Mukuta Rai, and, that the country should be called Nagpur. The child was carried to neighbouring Manki, who adopted him, and Phani Mukuta Rai in due course fulfilled his destiny."*

The Raj family and Feudatory Chiefs of Chota Nagpur, Orissa and Central Provinces intermarry with Kshatriya Rajput families. The Mundas are a Vedic race as their belief, that the soul of the dead goes to the plants or water, is recorded in the Rig Veda. The poor Mundas who embrace Christianity refuse to sit with other Christians to take their meals nor take to weaving easily. The old instinct still lingers. It seems therefore that the Atharva Veda, which owes its origin to the Kasyapa family, was first introduced in the kingdom of Ajodhya. Dasaratha's daughter Shanta, who was born out of the sacrifice of Vasistha, was given in adoption to his friend Lomapada on condition that he would send Rishyasringa to perform the sacrifice for getting sons. It was for this the sage with his wife came to perform the sacrifice. It is evident that the sage Rishyasringa of the Kasyapa family practised the ceremony under Atharva Veda and it owed its origin to the Angirasa family, who were designated Atharva Angirasa.

The word Angirasa seems to be the composition of two words—Anga and Rishi—and Angirasa is a variant of Angarshi. The Angirasa family lived in the kingdom of Marutta.† Vaisali, the name of the kingdom of Marutta, owed its origin to the early times of Rig Veda. "The king Vaisala", says, Professor Pargiter, "is said to have founded Vaisala or Vaisali as his capital".‡ It is like Mithila, the capital of the king Mithi. The Vaisala dynasty descended from Manu's son

***From Tea Districts Labour Association's "Hand-Book of Castes and Tribes" (1924) Pages 9-10.**

†Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," Page 157.

‡Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," Page 97.

Nabhanedistha. The family was Vaisa and it seems to be more probable the name owes its origin to Vaisa, a Rig Vedic hymn maker—Vatsapri Bhalandana is the reputed author of Rig Veda IX 68—who is the founder of the Vaisala dynasty, mentioned in both the Epics.

Kasyapa did yeoman service to the Kshatriya race in saving the Kshatriya princes from the cruel hands of Parasurama.* It is said that the ancestor of Lomapada, Dibiratha, the grandson of Dadhivahana, was saved in the hermitage of Gautama on the Ganges. In the dynastic list of Mr. Pargiter, Promothi of the Vaisala dynasty and Lomapada and Dasarath were contemporary kings. It proves that the influence of the Atharva Veda extended to these kingdoms through the Kasyap family and Vasistha received the epithet Atharvanidhi II.† Dr. Winternitz explains the two expressions—Atharvan and Angiras—as two distinct magic formulas. The institute of Manu (XI.33) says clearly that the sacred texts of Atharva Veda are the weapons of the Brahmins to kill their enemies. Dr. Winternitz said : —

"There exists a rather large class of magic songs, which are intended for the needs of the kings, partly exorcism formulas against enemies and partly benedictions. Every king was compelled, in India, from the earliest times, to have his Purohit or family priest, and this family priest had to be familiar with the magic rites which refer to the life of a king ('rajakramani,' 'kings' rites') and also with the songs and charms belonging to these rites. The Atharva Veda therefore is closely connected with the warrior caste" ‡

Chapter 49 of Shanti Parva is very important for it sets at rest the Western theory of Aryan imigration from the West. It will be seen that even at the fearful time of Kshatriya extermination by Parasurama, Kshatriya princes and princessess did not leave India but sought protection in Vaisya and Sudra families and in some cases were reared by bears, cows and tigers in the woods. They did not go out of India, nor did the Aryans come from any country other than India. The so-called Non-Aryans were no different from the Aryans as aborigines. The Vedic texts will testify to it.

"We are surrounded on all sides by Dasyu tribes. They do not perform sacrifices; they do not believe in anything; their rites are different: they are not men; O' destroyer of foes! kill them. Destroy the Dasa race!" (X 22.8). "In X, 49 Indra proclaims that he has deprived the Dasyu race of the name of Arya (verse 3); that he has destroyed Navavastva and Brihadratha of the Dasa race (verse 6); that he cuts the Dasas in twain, "It is for this fate that they have been born!" (Verse 7)§

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* Santi Parva, Chapter 49.

† Prof. Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition", Page 246.

‡ Dr. Winternitz "A History of Indian Literature" Page 120

§ "The Vedic Period" Book I, Chapter IV.

It is very unfortunate that Western scholars like the learned Pargiter are not exempt from fanciful dreams, for he says that the Kasyapa, Angira and Atri might be non-Aryan as their names were not Sanskrit like Bhiru and Vasistha. In the case of Kasyapa he mentioned that the inference was further strengthened by the Daitya monarch Hiranya Kasipu's name. He should have seen that it is very common in Ancient India that the father's or the family name distinguished one from another of the same name. The learned Western scholar will admit that Kasyapa was the patriarch of Hindu genesis, and Aryan Bhargava and Vasisthas officiated as priests to Hiranya Kasipu.* He should have seen that Aryan priests would not officiate at the sacrifice of a non-Aryan demon, if he really was one. There is no mention of Aryan migration from the West in the sacred books of the Hindus. On the other hand, in the Mahabharata, of the goddesses of wealth Lakshmi presided in the abodes of the virtuous Asuras and Sambara was devoted to the Brahmans. In Vedic times the causes of the great fight were not like those of the Epics but for putting a stop to mischievous plans for doing injury to irrigation and agriculture and for the possession of cows.

Science has proved that the colour white is formed out of seven original colours, and the Hindus had been the dwellers of the seven river islands and came to be known by the name of Aryan when they formed themselves into a society. The god Siva, the centre of the Pasupat cult, is dressed in the fashion of an aborigine, from which the Narayana cult evolved. Aryan civilisation was evolved not from one place or region but from the several places of India. Professor Macdonell says :—

"It is natural to suppose that the numerous Vedic tribes, under the altered conditions of life in rest, plains, coalesced into nations with new names .... It is not unlikely that the Tritsus, whose name disappears after the Rig Veda, also furnished one of the elements of the Kuru nation...A Brahmana passage contains an indication that the Turvacas may have been one of the several small tribes to make up a nation. Perhaps the Yadus, generally associated with the Turvacas in the Rig Veda, were also one of them. The name of the Panchala itself (derived from Pancha, five) seems to indicate that these people consisted of an aggregate of five elements."†

The Rig Vedic tribes were the Purus, Ucinaras, Srinjayas, Matryas, Matsyas, Chedis, etc., besides those already mentioned. The Gandharas, Mujavats, Maghadhas, Angas etc., were mentioned in the Atharva Veda.

* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Historical Tradition, Page 307.

† Professor Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature" Page 156-157.

"The Dasyus", says Mr. Macdonell, "are described in the Rig Veda as non sacrificing, unbelieving and impious They styled themselves Aryas or 'Kinsmen' as opposed to the aborigines, to whom they gave the name of Dasyu or Dasa, 'fiends,' in later times also called Anarya or non-Aryans."*

The Vedic battle of ten kings was fought on the banks of Parushni. The ten kings coalesced in their endeavours to cross the stream to deflect its course, but were repulsed with very heavy loss by the Tritsus.

'The Bharatas appear to be specially connected with sacrificial rites in the Rig Veda, for Agni (as belonging to the Bharatas) receives the epithet Bharata, and the ritual goddess Bharata, frequently associated with Sarasvati, derives her name from there. In a hymn to Agni (III 23) mention is made of two Bharatas named Devacravas and Devavata who kindled the sacred fire on the Drishadvati, the Apaya and the Sarasvati, the very region which is later celebrated as the holy land of Brahmanism under the names of Brahmavarta and Kurukshettra".†

The basis of Vedic society was reflected in the different centres when the distinct divisions of one Rig Veda were developed and followed. The priestly Parisada or assembly of the different centres decided the scriptural point and Vyasa and Valmiki were commissioned simply to work out their view-points instead of their own individual opinion. They were not fictituous personages, for one finds them connected with the distinct branches of important sections of Aryan education. Vyasa was a philosopher and law-giver of no mean order, whereas Valmiki was one of the teachers of the Taittiriya Pratisakhya.‡ The Bharata Samhita was the first source of Epic structure and its growth was wholly connected with Vedic mythology and sacrifices, as the very name implies with the explanation given by the learned Western scholar of the word "Bharata."

The Uttarakanda Ramayana gives a clue to the Mahabharata and the Ramayana as belonging to the time of Agastya; Narada reciting to Sanat Kumar, in the fashion of the Bharata Samhita, a portion of the Mahabharata. It also mentions the meeting at Pratisthana of the Apsara Urbasi and Pururaba, on whom the development and growth of the Ailas depended, as described in the Bharata Samhita; the Vaijayayat of Nimi; the marriage of Trinabindu's daughter with Pulastya, the progenitor of Ravan; the history of the family leading to the mischief at the sacrifice of Marutta, and putting up of an obstacle to the ambition of Vedavati, the daughter of the royal sage Kusadhaja, to become the wife of Narayana. She would avenge the wrong of Ravana by coming to earth as Sita, daughter of Janaka, to fulfil her desire to become the wife of

*Professor Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature" Page 150—152.
†Professor do. do do. Page 155.
‡Professor Weber's do. do. Page 191.

Narayana Rama. It ascribed the cause of the separation of Rama and Sita to the curse of Bhrigu upon Narayana when his wife was killed for sheltering the Asuras, as described in the Poulama Parva of the Mahabharata. Besides, the great sage Valmiki, as is clearly stated in the Annusasana Parva, Chapter XVIII, fell out with the fire-worshippers and was cursed, and worshipped God Siva to be absolved from the sin of the curse, equal to the murder of a Brahman.

Valmiki and Chavana are identical and the Mahabharata mentioned that Rama Charita was written by a Bhargava. Veda desc̈ribes the story of Cyavana, whose youth was restored by the Asvins. The myth of Poulama Parva in the birth of a son by Sukanya, the daughter of the Bidharva king, is explained. The other explanation may be given a thought, though it was not expressly mentioned to be so by the learned Pargiter.

"It shows that real tradition has been mixed up with mythology. Usanas-Sukra is identified with the planet Venus, and among Bhrigu's offspring are included gods and semi-divine personages. The Matsya account says Bhrigu married Puloman's daughter Divya, and had by her the twelve Bhrigu gods, Cyavana and Apnavana; Apnavana's son was Aurva and his son was Jamadagni. The best Mahabharata account says Bhrigu had two sons, Sukra-Kavigraha, who was Guru of the Daityas and gods (Sura), and Cyavana; Cyavana married Manu's daughter Arusi and had a son Aurva; Aurva's son was Rcika, who had a hundred sons, the eldest of whom was Jamadagni; and Jamadagni had four sons of whom Rama was the youngest. The other Mahabharata passages will be considered separately.................. ...Cyavana it is often said, married Sukanya, daughter of Manu's son, king Saryati, and sacrificed for him. He is also connected with Manu's other son Prsadhra. His position is therefore clearly fixed, though late, and especially Brahmanic, tales wrongly introduce him as existing at other periods; and he is made the subject of fable even in the Rig Veda" *

The family of Ravana originally belonged to the one of the Seven Patriarch sage Pulasta, married to the daughter Trinabindhu of the Vaisala kingdom. Ravana and Kumbhakarna became demons but his brother Bibhishan was not like them. It proves one important point, that Aryan Ravana and his brother Kumbhakarna were so transformed, like Kartabirjarjuna, that they were described by the poets with so many heads and hands to invent mischief to the causes of humanity to make people believe the wrong they did, lest people should disbelieve them as licensed poetic exaggerations.

In Vedic times it was not a man's birth but his culture and education that made him respected. It will be futile to try to convince anybody that the early civilisation of any country of the world was governed by any two, three or four social organisations. The Vedas do not admit any caste system or status or restrictions in society.

*Prof. Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition", pp. 193-194.

The Nishads, Nagas, Daityas, Danabas, Rakshas, Gandharvas and Dasyus became oppressors or opposers of the ancient civilisation, but all the same they were pure Aryans. Instances were not wanting to show that marriage alliances took place between Indra and Poulama, Yajati and Sharmistha, Nala and Damayanti, etc. They were called non-Aryan as they were not subjected to the rules and religion of the growing Aryan civilisation. The term Vratya or Apostate is frequently mentioned in the Atharva Samhita, and the country of Maghadha is said to be full of these people. It proves beyond doubt that the uncivilised had been civilised and that they had again relapsed into their previous condition or were again transformed to their former state and courted destruction by wars for want of self-control and culture.

There are no traces of Hatairism in the Vedas or in the Aryan Epic civilisation. This is the best proof of Vedic and Epic inter-relation besides the existence of the names of Vedic kings and events in the Epics. In the present scientific world, language plays an important part in settling many difficult questions regarding a clue to an important date or an important fact of past history which tradition or written history has failed to give. Professor Max Muller has found Sanskrit to be the mother of all the tongues of the world. The language and style of the Veda and Epic substantiate their inter-relation. The great expert linguist Sir G. Grierson found that the language of the Rig Veda represents the archaic dialect of the Upper Doab. It was the place from where Aryan speech of the purest form spread all over India and in it the heroes of the Epics lived, moved and their glories were sung.

The learned Pargiter has been good enough to give us the important facts against the theory of the alleged entrance of the Aryans in the North-Western Province of India.

"The broad result stands out clear that the Aila stock, which began in a small principality at Allahabad, had dominated the whole of North India and down to Vidarbha, with the exception of the three Manva kingdoms of Ayodhya, Videha and Vaisali; and these had been influenced by the Ailas. So it is said, the earth was dominated by the five races (Vamsa) descended from Yayati. This result agrees exactly with the Aryan occupation of India, so that what we call the Aryan race is what Indian tradition calls the Aila race, and so Aila-Aryan The Saudyumna stock would no doubt be the Munda race and its branch the Mon-Khmer folk in the east; and in the intervening region it would have been subjugated by the Anava occupation, and also by a prior invasion of Bengal by new-comers from the sea if the above surmise of such an invasion be true."*

* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," Page 295.

It is clearly stated by Vyasa to his son Suka that he prepared the Mahabharta from the 10,000 (ten thousand) Rikhs or Mantras of the Rig Veda and the mysteries of all the Vedas were revealed in the book he compiled, with all the didactic stories and true accounts, in such a way as would admonish faith, instruction and wisdom (Chapter 245 of Santi Parva, verses 13 and 14). The patriarch Bhisma in Chapter 78 preached to Yudhisthira the duties of Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, complaining bitterly against the conduct of the Brahman sages who were said to have attained exalted heaven by performing acts of cruelty against those who were, in fact, friends of humanity. The annotator Nilkantha illustrated the actions in this respect of Utanka, Parasara, etc., who were all leaders of the performers of Snake, Rakshas, etc. sacrifices. The kings were extolled as having attained the blissful region for doing a sinful act. It is said here that right is wrong and wrong is right in relation to virtue and vice according to place and time. The Brahmans and kings do not commit any sin in self-defence or for compelling others to follow their duties and for punishing robbers. The Brahman void of Vedic learning and the king incapable of giving protection to his subjects are described like clouds that produce no rain.

The Uttarakanda Ramayana expressly mentioned that Sita was treated like a mother. Rama did not kill Ravana and Bali to usurp their kingdoms but to reward the good Bibhisana and Sugriva, who were unjustly chastised and exiled by their wicked brothers. The Mahabharata is the Itihasa Veda and the Ramayana is the Puranic Veda. In the sacrifice celebrations of both the Sutras Sankyana and Asvalayana, on the eighth and ninth days of recitations, it is clearly explained that Itihasa Veda is the Matsya Sammada and Tarksya Vaipasyata is the Purana Veda. Satapatha Brahmana says king Matsya Sammada and his people were water-dwellers. Satyabati was the adopted girl of the king of fishermen. Her hand was sought by a sage and was refused, and king Santanu got her by disinheriting the just right of Bhisma, his son by his former wife Ganga. It is also alleged that the author of the Mahabharata was descended from her and revived the Royal family of Santanu later on. Cyavana, the Valmiki, was purchased by Nahusa from the fishermen by the gift of a cow, and the fisherman went to heaven by the gift of that cow and Nahusa got the throne of heaven when the Asura Britta was killed and Indra was in hiding out of fear. This is the historic and Pouranic connection of the Ramayana with the Veda. The Arthasastra of Kautilla itself speaks of what was then regarded as Veda to justifiy the expression used in both the Epics:—

"The three Vedas, the Saman, Re and Yajur, are the three-fold (Scripture). The Atharva Veda and the Itihasa Veda are also Vedas".* ....Itihasa means the Purana, Itivrtta (history), Akhyayika (tale), Udaharana (illustrative story), the Dharmasastra and the Arthasastra".†

The Mahabharata is said to be the fifth Veda, whereas the Ramayana is the second Veda in their respective tables of contents. The Pouranic and Organic theory of the creation of four castes from the four different functions of society or nation is given in the Rig Veda, Purusha Sukta‡ hymn, by Narayana to Nara. Both the Uttarakanda and the Ramayana preach the cult of Narayana and the defeat of Ravana, the follower of the Pasupat cult. This is the Vedic inter-relation of the Epics. The Pouranic theory of transformation of Devas and kings, etc., into beasts was exemplified in the sacrifice of king Marutta by Sambarta, the brother of Brihaspati, which was also described in the Mahabharata. But the difference in the description is marked and speaks of a time of the Pouranic age. Ravana appeared as a dog and the gods became beasts out of fear. Sambarta forbade the king Marutta, who was going to punish the evil doers, as they had already lowered themselves from Devas and Rakshas to inferior beasts. This is the implication of how gods and kings become beasts, when their hearts are full of selfish ends and fear, more or less moved by passion.

This is the word of the first couplet of Valmiki to the origin of the verse or couplet with which the idea of the Epic Ramayana was begun. Ravana was not killed until he took away Sita, who was Bedabati in a previous life as the daughter of the Royal sage Kusadhawaja, as recited in the Uttarakanda. The very name Bedabati implies a connection with the Pouranic fashion. Nor is this all. Agastya, the author of several Vedic hymns and marvellous mystic deeds, was the tutor and guide of Bharadwaja, the pupil of Valmiki, and was the adviser of the hero of the Ramayana. The final termination of the earthly career of Rama in the Uttarakanda is more than Pouranic and not natural nor historic like the Pandavas and Yadabas. The sage Durbasa appeared and made separation with Lakshman. A messenger from heaven in the form of an ascetic, he got audience with Rama alone. Durbasa was prevented from seeing Rama by Lakshman, as instructed, and was cursed by Agastya. This seemed to be the just punishment of Lakshman, who under false pretext took Sita and left her in the wood at the instance of Rama without a protest.

The Mahabharata was neither aristocratic like the Ramayana nor was it entirely under the influence of priests and Brahmans. The

* Book i, Chapter 3, (page 7).
† Book i, Chapter 5, (page 10).
‡ Canto 46, verse 54.

composition of the Ramayana was later than that of the Mahabharata. It was at a time when the twice-born castes were jealous of their birthright and looked down upon the servile people as the degenerate Sudras or non-Aryans. Even then there was no question of colour, for the hero and heroine of the Ramayana were not white but black, and Krishna, Arjuna and Draupadi of the other Epic also were. The ideal monarch, Rama, was praised for killing a Sudra who was transgressing the duties of Brahmana by practising Yoga, and for waging war against the two kings, one of demons and the other of gorillas, who had formed alliances and were ruling the earth after the cruel decimation of the Kshatriya race by Parasurama, a descendant of the Bhargava family. The Bideha family was the custodian of the Pasupat cult bow which Rama broke. Rama chastised Parasurama by the exhibition of his power in breaking the bow of Pasupati and putting an end to the Pasupat cult and establishing the Narayana cult in its place by putting an arrow to Parasurama's bow. Rama not only revived the Kshatriya prowess, proving it superior to that of the Brahmans, but punished the ruling kings Ravana and Bali, both guilty of incestuous connection. He did not spare even his own faithful and tried Queen Sita when, after the fire ordeal, people began to gossip in private about her living alone in the abode of the demon for such a long time. The funeral rites of demon Ravana were performed with Vedic rites. This is the best proof on record that he was not a non-Aryan demon of Ceylon. The Pandavas and Yadavas as well as Rama and his brothers were not Vedic persons like Pururoba, Yajati, Nahusa, Devapi, etc.

'The Mahabharata is not only a Veda," says Dr. W. Hopkins, "it is so important a Veda that to read it is to dispense with the need of reading other Vedas".*

A distinct change had gradually come over the Indo-Aryans in the field of intellect to transform their religious outlook. One is inclined to enquire into the circumstances, historical as well as mythological, which led to the establishment of religious beliefs on an altogether different basis from what they had been in the Rig Veda. And it is quite possible that the large body of people, who had new forms of worship thrust upon them from above or from below, by the priests, would have liked to know how they could be reconciled with their older beliefs in order to be imbued with devotional fervour, without which no religion can have any permanent hold. It is for this reason that Bharata Samhita was composed, expressly with the object of elucidating the texts of the Vedas, under the pretext of which new popular deities loosely connected with the Vedic gods and goddesses were introduced.

* "The Great Epic of India,' page 369.

The processes by which this was done were two-fold, firstly, by the deification of persons who had rendered distinguished services to the community, and secondly, by lowering the older Vedic deities in the estimation of the people.

In the Great War with the Asuras the gods won through the help of Kartika, the son of Siva, who began to receive worship for the great military services he rendered.

The cults of Pasupati and of Narayana were developed comprehensively so as to include the totality of all social activities of the Hindus. They became the basis of a higher and loftier conception of morality and constituted almost a puritanical re-action against the laxities and looseness which prevailed among all classes of people during the Vedic period. The intellectual freedom which the Vedic sages possessed led to a striking development of thought among them, and the period of Vedic culture may be regarded as the classical age of Indian history, which in spirit and achievements found a distant parallel in the extraordinary development of the classical mind of Europe. There is no reason to suggest inter-dependence, for the normal human mind has the same capacity for growth on the same lines in every country. But the elements which constitute the static factors of life and constitute character require definition in order that they might be binding upon all classes of men, for intellect divorced from ethical values tends to disintegrate everything that civilisation cherishes.

The Pasupat cult had a more popular origin. The great God Siva symbolises the materialistic principle of procreation, and Pasupati was identified with Rudra. The conflict which took place between Siva and Vishnu with regard to their shares in the sacrifice of Daksha, one of the progenitors of the universe, has its echo in the struggle between Rudra and Narayana in the Mahabharata for a similar reason. Dadhichi was the devotee of Rudra or Pasupati and Bhrigu and Vashistha those of Vishnu or Narayana. Dadhichi was the son of the sage Atharva, who is invoked with Angira and Bhrigu in the Pitrijajna in the Rig Veda. He left the Daksha Yajna when he found that no offering was being made to Siva. Like Vishnu, he had foretold the performer that he would not be able to complete the sacrifice, which actually happened in the end, until a compromise was made by the worship of Narayana. Britra, the great Asura, was a follower of Narayana* and his priest was Bhrigu and Sanat Kumar was his preceptor. Indra, who was the king of the Vedic deities, had to approach Narayana for the victory over Britra. Narayana told Indra that Britra would not be slain without the use of

* Britra Gita, Santi Parva.

Dadhichi's bone, and Dadhichi was thus sacrificed. Thus Indra was humbled and Saiba Dadhichi was removed.

At the junction of the Ganges with the Sea (Kapila Ashrama—Ganga-Sagara) the great Rama made offerings to the manes of his departed ancestors and Yudhisthira offered prayers to Varuna, not as a Vedic god but through him to Narayana, the creator of the universe, to whom the prayer in question is referred.

"I bow to the God who protects the universe, I bow to the God who is beyond this universe. O' Lord of gods, come near this salt sea....The fire, the Sun, the organ of generation, water, the goddess, the seed of Vishnu, nectar and the navel of nectar. The god of fire is the organ that generated you (ocean). The earth is your body. Vishnu gave the seed that caused your being You are the navel of nectar".*

It was Tvastra who raised his grandson Britra to fight against Indra. The story of Bhagiratha, who offered oblations to the manes of his deceased ancestors, the sons of Sagara, by means of the water of the Ganges River carried into the Ashrama (hermitage) of Kapila, where they had been cursed by the great sage regarded as an Avatara of Narayana and which forms the basis of the Ramayana, testifies to the hold which ancestor worship had on the religious beliefs of the early Aryans. But it cannot be overlooked that Indra's hiding in the waters of a lake, being alarmed at the thought that the sage might still be living, recalls to one's mind its resemblance with the similar action of Durjodhana in hiding himself in the lake of Dwaipayana at the last scene of the Kurukshettra War. The cult of ancestor worship has its reverse side in the story of Britra, who was the son of Trisira, who was again the son of Tvastra.

The Narayana cult was then introduced in the country of the Vatsas. Professor Rapson, in his "Ancient India," identifies the land of the Vatsas with the corner where the rivers Ganges and Jamuna meet at Prayaga or Allahabad.

"Vatsa, the region of Prayaga or Allahabad in the United Provinces. Its capital was Kaucambi, which has been identified, though not with absolute certainty, with Kosam, the name borne by two adjacent villages (Kosam Inam and Kosam Khiraj) in the Allahabad district".†

Vincent Smith thinks that Kosam is an abbreviation of Kosambi, which is known to the Jains as Kosambinagara (*vide* pp. 503-4 J.R.A.S. 1898). The remains of a fortress four miles in circuit at Kosam speak of its past great military strength. In Brown's "Coins of India" it is said that at the close of the 3rd century B. C. cast coins were issued

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* Mahabharata Chapter CXIV, Vana Parva, page 174, Slokas 26, 27-28.

† Professor E. J. Rapson's "Ancient India," page 170.

with the names of local kings of Kausambi, Ayodhya and Mathura in the Brahmi script. The coins have a tree within a railing on the obverse. At the time of the Buddhist Chinese travellers there were more than 50 Devas temples and the non-Buddhists were very numerous and ten Buddhist monasteries were all in ruins. Keru's "Indian Buddhism" says that Kausambi, Mathura, etc., have hairs and nails of the Tathagata with stupas erected over the relics. The place was famous for being a centre of trade and religious activities of Ancient India. •

The religion of Siva as a devotee of Narayana found acceptance among the people who lived around the river Saraswati in the Punjab in the kingdom of Srikantha. In Bana's "Harsacharita" it is mentioned as the famous place where the great king Harshabardhana's ancestors ruled. It is Thaneswar, famous for the association of the god of the same name, whose temple Mahmud of Gazni destroyed and then carried away the vast treasures under the idol. The place had become famous as the battlefield of the great Kurukshettra War. It was for these reasons that Siva and Narayana in their great fight, recorded in the Bharata Samhita, were described as Srikantha and Srivatsa respectively, as emblematic of the scars of fight and the centres of their worshippers.

Ultimately, as the cult of Narayana had more powerful Brahmanic families as its devotees and as it was philosophically much more developed, it prevailed over the Pasupat cult. Eventually all these new beliefs were brought together and given a consistent mythological shape in the cult of Narayana, which reconciled the old doctrines of Pitrijajna and Devajajna and marked a new epoch of intellectual progress. The conception of the Hindu Trinity, which owes it origin to circumstances mentioned above, became the starting point of a newer and more virile culture that far outstripped the Vedic culture that had culminated in six systems of Hindu philosophy and the metaphysics of the Upanishads. The evolution of Indian philosophy shows to what extent the progress of thought and political and economic factors were interdependent on one another in India; but the Bharata Samhita must not be confounded as a philosophical work. Its aim was highly practical; it aimed at teaching philosophy by examples, and as the connection between the Bharata Samhita and the Samkhya school has been explicitly mentioned in many places of the Mahabharata, it is necessary to show its position in the intellectual ferment that was going on in the land of the Vedic sacrifices. It is also necessary to refute the view, which is held by many scholars, that its main theme was the Great War between the Kurus and the Pandavas or

Kurus and Panchalas. The Bharata Samhita is not an heroic episode, but mainly a didactic one in its character.

Its main object was to uphold the claim of sound knowledge over the performances of sacrifices prompted by the desire of future reward and success. Men were induced to performance of acts sanctioned by the Vedas solely because they thought that they could avoid sorrow through them. A really wise man would not be tied to them, but would realise that God or deliverance can only be attained through knowledge. So real knowledge is the only means of liberation. In the Samkhya system knowledge is regarded as the only means of salvation, and hence it is inculcated by the Samkhya system of philosophy that it is knowledge which dispels sorrow, grief and fear. This philosophy is sometimes expressed in highly technical language and sometimes in a very popular manner in the Mahabharata, which really forms the essence of the teaching of the Bharata Samhita and is called the Bharata Savitri and which runs as follows :—

"From virtue, profit and pleasure originate, and for this it is sought. Virtue is eternal and pleasure and pain are not so. Soul is eternal and its frame is mortal, it is for this reason that one should not renounce virtue and religion either for the pleasures of the senses, cupidity or for fear. Thousands of mothers, fathers, wives and sons came and went and others will come and similarly go away. All kinds of fear and joy only affect the ignorant but not the wise. The aim of man ought to be to realise the highest Brahma and ultimately attain to Him".

The Bharata Savitri, which may be regarded as embodying the popular digest of the Samkhya school of Philosophy, was amplified by stories, legends and fables in the Bharata Samhita, and as this was the kernel of the teachings of the Mahabharata, the Bharata Savitri was the connecting link between the two different compositions, between a didactic theme and the Epic poem. The historical background of the two was entirely different. The Bharata Samhita was meant to close a period of war and anarchy and the Mahabharata was composed to inaugurate a period of intense activity on the part of the Kshatriyas and to urge them onward to carry out their own duties as the upholders of the social structure of Aryan Brahmanism.

Nor must it be forgotten that the Bharata Samhita was closely connected with the performance of sacrifices. It emphasises again and again the superior value of moral virtues as against that of acts represented by Yajnas. That Heaven is attained by the performance of sacrifice is regarded as a crude notion*; the truly wise (those who followed the Samkhya system of philosophy) always condemn acts inspired by a desire for reward. In fact, it can be shown easily that the speculations of the Bharata Samhita have had their origin in the dis-

*Santi Parva, Chapter 264.

putes which took place among the learned and the dissenters with regard to the reward-yielding power of the Yajnas. Ultimately the school of Kapila prevailed over the orthodox school and a revolution was accomplished in the region of thought and practice among the Brahmins, which was of very great moment in the cultural history of the Aryans. Subsequently the purely ethical and the Yogic philosophy of the Samkhya school reached a higher and more interesting phase of development through the introduction of one exclusive personal God immersed in meditation by Narada, followed by Veda Vyasa, whose followers were called Ekantins. The slaughter of animals was condemned, and though the practice was not abandoned altogether it became greatly modified.

The Brahmins gradually adapted themselves to the higher ethics and spiritual notions by changing the etymology of their name from the mere mutterer of hymns to the knower of Brahma, and sacrifices were greatly discredited in the school of Kapila. The metaphysics which are attributed to Kapila, define Prakriti (Nature) and Soul (Atma) in a completely different manner from the Vedantist. According to the Samkhya view, soul is invested with the attribute of consciousness, nature is a blind and inanimate object, intelligence is the offspring of nature, and is therefore by itself only a matter, just as the ray of the sun is merely an inanimate object, but becomes light by its contact with the sensation of sight. Intelligence is in the same way incapable of consciousness. It is only when soul resides in it, that it reaches the plane of understanding.

The Vedantist does not accept the view that intelligence is blind. He says that the world of will or intelligence lies beyond consciousness and unconsciousness, and that because it is the anti-thesis of true knowledge, it is called Avidya. Avidya is defined in the West by Kant as think in itself, by Schopenhaur as blind will, "as the permanent possibility of sensation" in the English language. The word Avidya implies the fact that it is related to true knowledge as contradiction (contraries) and therefore they inhere in the same thesis. According to the Samkhya school Prakriti (Nature) is independent and self-sufficient. The same is true of Jivatma (the individual soul) and they are connected by means of Paramatma, like so many beads in a rosary. The logical compactness which one finds in the metaphysics of the Brahma Sutra is a strong proof of its posterior origin to the school of Kapila.

Kapila has laid too much emphasis on non-violence, but Veda-Vyasa, the propounder of Brahma Sutra, *viz.*, the Vedanta, has a more

comprehensive view of life. The question, who is a real Brahmin, was very often debated. The philosophical speculations of the Upanishads, the Samkhya and the Vedanta school, were occasioned by the discontent of the Kshatriyas, who could not meet the extravagant demands of the Brahmins at the sacrifices. Consequently, Kapila, who was a Brahman sage, gave a new definition of the word Brahmana which has been quoted already. The outlook of Kapila in matters of sacrifices was too revolutionary. He condemned sacrifices outright. But the sacrifices were very popular and useful institutions, and if the orthodox dogmas were purged of their crude character, they could be revised on a healthy basis. Vyasa in his definition of the word Brahman follows closely on that of Kapila. It shows the alliance between the two schools in respect of ethics, but Kapila had condemned penances, and Veda Vyasa gave to it a higher meaning.

Veda Vyasa did not condemn sacrifices altogether as acts, but urged that they should be tempered with mercy. Penances were also sanctioned, if they were performed in a proper spirit. In the Upanishadic school, in which the Kshatriyas with their Brahmanic allies disserted on the mystic pantheism of the Brahma, the chief head of the sacrifice, and the school of Kapila, from which was evolved the notion of a personal God Narayana, deemed higher than the great Brahma who was said to have sprung from Him, animal sacrifices were now discredited, but a personal God could be reached by the pursuit of any of these paths, *viz.*, the Kriya Kanda (*i.e.*, the path of Acts), the Jnana Kanda (the path of knowledge), absolute renunciation and the path of concentration, meditation and faith. The bifurcation of the two main systems of thought from the Vedic school is a striking proof of the continuity of Indian culture, which strongly reacted on the material plane.

In fact, the doctrine of concentration, *i.e.*, Eikantic, is laid stress on in both.* Without denying the difficulty of reconciling the idea of an imminent personal god, which is the main theme of the Bharata Samhita, with the plurality of souls devoid of common origin, which is propounded by Kapila, it must be admitted that the school of Veda-Vyasa grew out of that of Kapila. It is expressly mentioned in Santi Parva, Chapter 352, that Veda-Vyasa, who was deeply immersed in contemplation about the nature of the supreme cause, by taking his stand on the Samkhya system of Yoga could not arrive at any satisfactory conclusion about it. The riddle of the phenomena of the world was revealed to him by his knowledge and realisation of Narayana.

* Mahabharata, Chapter 346.

On the contrary, however, there are many passages in the Mahabharata in which it is stated that Narayana is the object of worship in the Samkhya system of philosophy. It is quite clear, however, that in any case, Vyasa's teaching claims to improve on Kapila's view.

The Bharata Samhita is based upon the Samkhya school of Kapila. In fact, the whole relevant portions of the Bharata Samhita have been strung together round the Samkhya school, and it was by means of this that a bridge was constructed across the old thought of the priests and the new thought of the Kshatriyas. The Brahmins rose to the height of intellectual subtlety and formulated a system which in its popular form sanctioned the sacrifices; not as the chief means to the attainment of salvation, but certainly as a subsidiary one. The philosophical theory of the Bharata Samhita is propounded in the dialogue between Kapila and Svyuma Rashmi, and this was the basis of the Bharata Samhita. The historical personality of Kapila is sometimes denied by many scholars, but there cannot be any doubt that "Kapila was a real (human) philosopher and not a mere shadow of a divinity". He is in fact the only founder of a philosophical system known to the Epic. He is not only the oldest, he is the supreme seer identical with Agni with Siva also and with Vishnu" (Hopkins—"The Great Epic of India", pages 97 and 98). Kapila was not an atheist. The great Kapila vanquished the Kshatriyas in their metaphysical disputation and effected a synthesis in the realm of conflicting ideologues.

It is borne out in the Mahabharata, etc. The Kshatriya king Janaka of Videha was a great scholar of the Upanishadic lore. To him many a Brahmin scholar came for spiritual enlightenment. From Janaka the teacher to Janaka the disciple is an interesting metamorphosis which is brought about by the school of philosophy founded by Kapila. It was not for nothing that Janaka learnt new lessons of the Samkhya school of thought from the students of Kapila, Panchacika and Sulava, a female devotee of note, who read a lecture on true chastity, not one which has connection with flesh, blood and senses. The school of Kapila gives to such a Brahmin prominence over others. He regards renunciation through knowledge as the highest act entitling a person to liberation. It has already been shown, the background of worldliness against which Kapila uttered his word of protest. It is a doctrine as abstruse to an ordinary layman as the Upanishad. Kapila exposes the fallacy of performing sacrifices with the object of attaining reward of heaven in after life. The Brahmanic stories which one gets in the Epics as well as in the Puranas have preserved the essential features of this revolution which he has achieved.

The repeated insistence in the Mahabharata, supported by the evidence of the Ramayana, on the identity between Samkhya system and the Narayanya cult is well known.

The Bharata Samhita was confined to the propounding of the Narayana cult and some semi-historical and semi-legendary stories, which were introduced to show the inter-relation between theories and practice of religion. It must have been a very short work. The object for which the Bharata Samhita was compiled is stated very clearly in the Anukaramanika. It was a book composed chiefly to bring out the full meaning of the Vedic knowledge and religion and to popularise its practice among men. The Narayana cult was the most important contribution of the Bharata Samhita. Nor must one leave out in this connection the various legends which had gathered round the performance of sacrifice and the accounts which were narrated at the time of their celebration. It was a very short, but a very popular book with the Brahmins and their followers, the ancient kings. The Bharata Samhita was not composed at a time when the reading of the Vedas became the proud privilege only of the Brahmins.

The original Bharata Samhita was lost when it assumed the comprehensive title of the Mahabharata. The most difficult thing would be to recover the original first edition of the Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata. The aim of the two books seems to have been identical but they underwent so many changes and additions with the progress and exigencies of the times, that it would be mere waste of energy and time to present them separately, as there are very few people who will be interested in them. Besides very few people take any interest in the original texts of books of this nature. Dramas and novels are not the books of interest. The great Vedantist philosopher Sankaracharya said that the Mahabharata was meant for those who were debarred from studying the Vedas and Vedanta.*

In the days of the Vedas the question of hero-worship did not arise. The Vedas were not ancient histories to record every event and the deeds of kings. The Vedas record the sentiments of ancient seers in their hymns about the mysterious unknown, the maker of this world, or to propitiate the gods. They recorded the different ages of learning, culture and religion in the acts of chanting hymns, offering libations in the differrent sacriffces, absorbing meditations and concentration of mind, restraining the powerful senses and their enjoyments. The Vedas do not give the chronology of Indian kings or priests with any accurate figures of their dominations and influences in the country.

*Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," Page 289.

Civilisation and religion went hand in hand, and they spread by inter-relations of trade and commerce. Indian products were carried to all parts of the world from time immemorial, in Indian ships. It dates back earlier than 2,000 B. C. But the Indian traders were clever enough not to disclose their trade routes to others and they enjoyed the monopoly so long as they were not discovered. Babylonian history gives the date of its civilisation so far back as 2,458 B. C. and admits it to have come from districts lower down. The history of civilisation in India dates back long before this. Civilisation is the growth of prosperity. The manners, customs, luxury and wealth of India attracted the eyes of world-conquerors like Alexander the Great.

It is not admitted by all reasonable students of the Indian Epics that the Mahabharata in its first elements is as old as the Sutra period of the Vedas. If the age of the Mahabharata has to be decided from the literary composition of Sanskrit literature or the names of the Vedic Kings, accounts of whom appear therein, it will undoubtedly be before the Ramayana, notwithstanding the fact that the latter's hero is said to have belonged to an earlier age, the Treta. The neucleus of the Epics, the Bharata Samhita, is older than the ages of these Epics. There is a clear reference in the table of contents that Brahma was invoked by the author when he conceived the idea of making the book. He was advised to take the help of the son of Siva, Ganesha the reputed god, who is even now worshipped to forestall all abstracts in the way of success. The author originally composed the book consisting of 8,800 verses, but it was so condensed, stiff and mysterious that even the learned Ganesha took time to grasp its true meaning. The task of making it clear devolved upon Veda Vyasa, who did not publish his work till Dhritarastra, Pandu and Bidura died, and it took him full three years. It is admitted that Narada inspired the author of the Ramayana before he took it up.

The reference to Brahma in both the Epics means nothing but makes them in a way advocates of the Vedic rites and sacrifices. All the heroes of the Epics were born out of Vedic sacrifices performed by the renowned Vedic priests. The reputed authors Vyasa and Valmiki represent the distinct lines of the priests Vasistha and Bhrigu, who were called Mitra Varuniya. Vasistha was the favourite of king Indra and thus became the priest of the Bharata race. The comprehensive term—Bharatas, as an ancient Aryan race, has a historical foundation in the Rig Veda. It is said that the similarity in language and thought between the Persian Avesta and the Rig Veda gives just ground to conclude that they had lived together for some time before they were

separated. The term 'Aryan' derives its origin from Sanskrit 'Arya' and Avestan 'Airya'.

The story of divine punishment inflicted on the builders of the tower of Babel made the world once believe that Hebrew was the most primitive language of mankind, but the scientific researches of philologists has led to the discovery that Sanskrit is the mother of the tongues of the world. It is the language in which Vedic hymns were utterd and handed down to posterity, which has merged in time into the classical Sanskrit of the Epics, containing as it does, stereotyped forms of some archaisms and irregularities to which modern grammarians take exception. The ancient local dialects are called Prakrits or natural dialects, precisely in the same way as the Roman languages have sprung from the Latin dialects of the common people. Prakrit became the medium of religious doctrines meant for the masses, who did not attend Vedic sacrifices and became Jains. It is improved into the literary language Pali in Ceylon.

The Satapatha Brahmana supplies an important link in the history of religion and its centres. The ancient Vedic literature is styled revelation or Sruti. The Vedas and their Brahmanas refer to a religion of works, whereas the Aranyakas and Upanishads to that of knowledge. The joys of earth and heaven in this and after life alike appeared transient as being the fruits of the religion of works. The new revolution of thought appeared in the object of the religion of knowledge, whose chief aim was to avert being fast-bound in the chain of mundane existences in heaven or in hell, determined by the good or evil on the day of judgment. It was then realised that there was no real or essential difference between the soul of the individual and that of the world. Like the clay vessels of different names Atman is represented in all men only with different appellations. The release from the illusion or Maya can only be attained by right and true knowledge that everything besides Atman which seems to exist, is nothing but illusion.

The time of the Upanishads was really a sort of revolt against the ceremonials and exclusiveness of the Brahmans. The sacrifices had become the monopoly of the priestly classes of different gotras. In this revolt not only the great kings like Janaka and Janmejoya I, but ladies like Sulava, Gargi and Maitreye played prominent parts in intelligent discussions on the question. The Upanishads and the Vedanta system of philosophy then showed the marvellous development of the age with the fulness and subtlety of the learned men and women of the day. The courts of Janaka and Benares became famous for this,

The famous Brahmans Gargya and Balaki became disciples of the king of Benares, Ajatsatru and Gargi and Maitreye discoursed with Yajnavalkya, the high priest of the king of Videha, while Sulava censured the king himself as he could not realise or grasp the instructions of Panchacikha. The mention of Jainism cannot be taken as an interpolation, as it originated with the father of Bharata, the founder of Jainism, Risava.

Brahmanism, which had at one time assumed the form of congregational worship at the sacrifices, soon ceased to be so with the idea of a practical rule of life for an abstract right knowledge as the true means of securing the freedom of soul in the appetites of blood and flesh of the frail human body. It was for this reason that the ancient monastic cultural institutions soon became congregational centres of great dimensions, performing a twelve years sacrifice at Naimisharanya to protect the interests of the priests and their disciples as well. The result was that large numbers of Puranas were manufactured. The reciting of religious books in congregations appeared to be a very great necessity and a class of men, the Sutas, was trained specially to perform this task properly. It is for this reason that all the Puranas were the discourses between Sounaka and Souti, irrespective of the time and place of the birth of these Puranas in a stereotyped fashion of beginning and end. The Bharata Samhita was not of that type. The two Indian Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, were not cast in the same fashion. The language of Brahmanism is always and everywhere Sanskrit, but for the mass education and conversion Prakrit and Pali are found to be the medium of religious instructions to Jains and Buddhists. Professor Macdonell says :—

"Sankhya, which, for the first time in the history of the world, asserted the complete independence of the human mind and attempted to solve its problems, solely by the aid of reason. On the Sankhya were based the two heterodox religious systems of Buddhism and Jainism, which denied the authority of the Veda. Still more heterodox was the Materialist philosophy of Charvaka, which went further and denied even the fundamental doctrines common to all other schools of Indian thought, orthodox and unorthodox, the belief in transmigration dependent on retribution and the belief in salvation or release from transmigration .... The two non-Brahmanical religions, flourished the lokayata ("directed to the world of sense"), or materialistic schools, usually called that of the Charvakas from the name of the founder of the doctrine. It was regarded as peculiarly heretical, for it not only rejected the authority of the Vedas and Brahmanic ceremonial but denied the doctrines of transmigration and salvation accepted by all other systems... ..The strong scepticism of the Charvakas showed itself in the rejection of all the means of knowledge accepted by other schools, excepting perception. To them matter was the only reality. Soul they regarded as nothing but the body with the attribute of intelligence. They held it to be created when the body is formed by the combination of elements, just as the power of intoxication arises from the mixture of certain

ingredients. Hence with the annihilation of the body the soul also is annihilated. Not transmigration, they affirm, but the true nature of things, is the cause from which phenomena proceed. The existence of all that transcends the senses they deny, sometimes with an admixture of irony. Thus the highest being, they say, is the king of the land whose existence is proved by the perception of the whole world; hell is earthly pain produced by earthly causes; and salvation is the dissolution of the body. Even in the attribution of their text-book to Brihaspati, the name of the preceptor of the gods, a touch of irony is to be detected. The religion of the Brahmans receives a severe handling. The Vedas, say the Charvakas, are only the incoherent rhapsodies of knaves, and are tainted with the three blemishes of falsehood, self-contradiction and tautology; Vedic teachers are impostors, whose doctrines are mutually destructive; and the ritual of the Brahmans is useful only as a means of livelihood. 'If,' they ask, 'an animal sacrificed reaches heaven, why does the sacrificer not rather offer his own father?' "*

"On the moral side the system is pure Hedonism. For the only end of man is here stated to be sensual pleasure, which is to be enjoyed by neglecting as far as possible the pains connected with it, just as a man who desires fish takes off the scales and bones. 'While life remains, let a man live happily, let him feed on ghee even though he run into debt; when once the body becomes ashes, how can it ever return again'?"†

The followers of Charvaka were then called the Yabans or Mlechhas as they were the most hated of all beings and worse than the foreigners whom the traders saw.

It reveals the ridiculous age of innovation which only increased the presumption of man. Truth warns against impending danger, but malice only reviles for the past. The fair appearance of free-will often permits the frightful ravages of evil spirits which a mortal weilds to rule the difficult helm of destiny, if he be not permitted to declare himself either a prophet of the almighty or even a philosophy—as it was with Charvaka. No one beholds the great Creator as He veils himself within the spirit, soul or his own eternal laws.

"Wherefore a god the sceptic like Charvak seems to assert
The world itself suffices for itself."

The voice of the majority is no proof of justice, as truth is created for wisdom and beauty for the feeling heart. There are evil spirits who take their seat in the human breast where there is no conscience to guard it, like cankerworms of boasted reason. They consume all tender flowers, growing on human hearts. Inclinations change and make the unstable public judgment, like the tide, flow and ebb. The power of tyrants can only bind the hands, but the devotion of the heart rises free to God.

Charvaka is dead with his faith, which gives no peace or breath to life. The fickle multitude and their king, who ruled the earth, are

* Professor Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," Pages 386, 405-6

† Professor Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," Page 407.

gone. It points a great lesson—to become a virtuous man. Mind is contracted within a narrow circle. It is man who expands it with his loftier objects. He who has given satisfaction to the best of his time, has lived for all ages. Some unbelieving people like Charvaka, asserted that nothing could be seen, because nothing was behind it, and a ruler like Durjodhana with his ign rant followers heard and believed what Charvaka said. He was exposed to posterity as a bright example of one who ruled to make a mockery of men. He was seized and hastily removed inspite of all his majesty of power, strength of arms and allies, by a man whom he had exiled and robbed by unjust means. This is the metaphysical bearing of the Bharata Samhita on the Mahabharata.

Regarding the Ramayana, Professor Macdonell in his "Sanskrit Literature" says:—

"There is much more probability in the opinion of Jacobi, that the Ramayana contains no allegory at all, but is based on Indian mythology The foundation of the second part would thus be a celestial myth of the Veda transformed into a narrative of earthly adventures according to a not uncommon development. Sita can be traced to the Rigveda, where she appears as the Furrow personified and invoked as a goddess. In some of the Grihya Sutras she again appears as a genius of the ploughed field, is praised as a being of great beauty, and is accounted the wife of Indra or Parjanya, the rain god. There are traces of this origin in the Ramayana itself. For Sita is represented (i. 66) as having emerged from the earth when her father Janaka was once ploughing. and at last she disappears underground in the arms of the goddess Earth (vii. 97). Her husband, Rama, would be no other than Indra, and his conflict with Ravana, chief of the demons would represent the Indra-Britra myth of the Rigveda. This identification is confirmed by the name of Ravana's son being Indrajit, "Conqueror of Indra", or Indrasatru, "Foe of Indra" the latter being actually an epithet of Britra in the Rigveda. Ravana's most notable feat, the abduction of Sita, has its prototype in the stealing of the cows recovered by Indra. Hanumat, the chief of the monkeys and Rama's ally in the recovery of Sita, is the son of the wind-god, with the patronymic Maruti, and is described as flying hundreds of leagues through the air to find Sita. Hence in his figure perhaps survives a reminiscence of Indra's alliance with the Maruts in his conflict with Britra, and of the dog Sarama, who, as Indra's messenger, crosses the waters of the Rasa and tracks the cows. Sarama recurs as the name of a demoness who consoles Sita in her captivity The name of Hanumat being Sanskrit the character is probably not borrowed from the aborigines. As Hanumat is at the present day the tutelary deity of village settlements all over India, Professor Jacobi's surmise that he must have been connected with agriculture, and may have been a genius of the monsoon, has some probability.*... ..The careful investigations of Professor Jacobi have shown that the Ramayana originally consisted of five books only (ii-vi).†......"For the tribal hero of the former has in the latter been transformed into a national hero, the moral ideal of the people, and the human hero (like Krishna in the Mahabharata) of the five genuine books (excepting a few interpolations) has in the first and last become deified and identified with the god Vishnu, his divine nature in these additions being always present to the minds of their authors."‡

*Professor A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," pages 312-313.
† Professor A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," page 304.
‡ Professor A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," page 305.

The Ramayana owes its existence to the Bharata Samhita and is an Epic which proves the victory of the Narayana cult over the Pasupat cult. Siva is represented to be the best of all Yogis or ascetics. The Mahabharata gives the clue to Valmiki's eminence.* It is said that Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana, himself fell out with certain fire sacrificers in a discussion which they found against Veda and cursed him as guilty of Brahmanicide. He practised severe religious austerities to win the favour of the God Siva by meditation and was not only purged of all his sins but was blessed with a boon to acquire great fame in the world (8-10 verses). This was how an ant hill grew round him and entitled him to be called Valmiki.

The story of Chyavana coincides with it in every detail. He became successful when King Sarjati's daughter, Sukanya, struck his eyes and made him adopt the life of a householder and follow the path of love instead of concentration and meditation only without realising the spirit of love and its centre in the great Creator of the universe. The system of Yoga and sacrifices he condemned as killing the senses, like a hunter taking the lives of poor innocent beasts and birds of the wood following the mean profession of livelihood or pleasure of hunting. Everyone is aware of the famous exclamation which gave birth to the origin of the Ramayana and made him famous.

He first realised that proper environments are necessary to keep one in spirit, so that the mind might be free from sordid and remorseful thoughts. For this meditation cannot go on without a companion to attend to the mechanical needs of a person, to maintain health and home. If the essence of home and health is sacrificed how can a nation or religion grow to foster a healthy nation? The woman who does not want to make a home must be undermining a nation, and if a man having no idea of good conduct and morality propagates a race he raises nothing but a nation of hunters. Medicines and treatment are not necessary where the housewife performs the part of a doctor in diet. The ancient seers inculcated the necessity of having a housewife who knew how to devise and prepare a correct régime of food and drink in pleasing variety to promote taste and health. It then required the magic prescription of herbs and pills by expert doctors. He found that women must be taught not only to look after the food and drink but to create environments conducive to meditation and teaching the young generation the true ideals of life by practising forbearance in actual life instead of Yoga system through absolute abstention, which is nothing less than human crucifixion of feelings and love, so very necessary for the true growth of religion and culture.

* Anushasana Parva, Chapter XVIII. (Mahabharata).

The following by Sita, the daughter of a king, of Rama in his exile and her residence in the luxurious palace of gaiety in Ceylon, in the midst of all sorts of allurements and with the prospect of happiness, could not dissuade her from the right and the background of thousands of the most beautiful girls of the world not being able to control the rapacity of Ravana, are the wonderful delineation of Valmiki. The girl, absorbed in the thought of re-union with her consort, and the great monster, the eloper, biting his lips with anger at not being able to lead her astray from the path of rectitude. The great author perhaps compared the performances of sacrifices with the fire ordeal of Sita before the consensus of public opinion so very revolutionary to truth and justice. Rama is described as an incarnation of Narayana to foil the boons of Brahma and Siva, which Ravana had secured. It is said in the Mahabharata that Ravana was a follower of Siva and performed a sacrifice with the flesh of his own body and was blessed with the power of creating new creatures and animals. He was extolled there as endowed with one hundred faces instead of ten.*

The great author excited the curiosity of Sita by presenting a golden deer, and she requested her beloved consort to capture it. She made Lakshman leave her when she heard a voice say that her husband was in danger. Ravana was made to appear in the guise of an ascetic and showed the many pitfalls to which ascetics were then liable for their forced total abstention from the senses. Total abstention is as disastrous as excessive gratification of the senses, in which Ravana indulged. His adversary Rama had one wife, Sita, whom he loved and admired; but when he was blessed with an heir and a son he abstained from the pleasures of the senses in order to devote his mind to the good of his subjects and country. He renounced everything as an incarnation of Narayana, as the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana states. This is the real Ramayana of Valmiki or Chyavana, with the accounts of Mandhata, Kartabirjarjuna, Kapila, Narada, etc., Vedic personages. This was composed in the old dialogue form of speech distinct from the later Ramayana, now believed to be the real original one. The current Ramayana's appendix is reputed to be the Yogavasistha. Dr. Keith says:—

"Often closely allied with Vedanta ideas, but, like the developments of that system, powerfully affected by the Samkhya and with strong affinities to the conceptions of which the Yoga philosophy is an ordered exposition, there exists a large mass of theological and mystical speculation. A comparatively early specimen not much distinguished from the Vedanta is the Yogavasis'ha (Ed. Bombay, 1911; Trans. Calcutta, 1909) which is reputed an appendix to the Ramayana and deals with all manner of topics, including final release; it is moderately old, as it was summarised in the ninth century by the Gauda Abhinanda in the Yogavasisthasara. An imitation

* *Vide* Annusasana Parva, Chapter XIV, 88-85 verses.

of the Mahabharata, the Jaimini Bharata (Cf. Weber, Monatsber BA. 1869, pp. 10ff., 369ff.), of which Book xiv, the Asvamedhikaparvan, alone has come down to us, is intended rather as a text-book of Vaisnava sect. The sectarian literature of the Pancharatra school of Vaisnavas, long best known from the late Narada Pancharatra (Ed. Bl. 1865) (perhaps 16th cent.), is better represented by a large number of Samhitas which may be of considerable age; the Ahirbudhnya (Ed. Madras, 1916 See F. O. Schrader, Intr. to the Pancharatra (1916); Govindacarya, JRAS. 1911, pp. 951ff.). which has been claimed to belong to the period of the later Epic, gives no very favourable impression of the literature which mixes Vedanta and Samkhya ideas in a curious way".*

It will be of great interest here to mention that the author of Uttaracharita followed Uttarakanda, as is clear from the word " Uttara" in the beginning of the book. Yogabasistha says that Bhrigu lost his wife by the horrible cry of Nrisingha Deva when slaying Hiranyakashipu and bore a grudge against him, referred to in the Poulama Parva and Santi Parva along with the rape committed by Ravana on his daughter-in-law Rambha, which resulted in his ultimate death. It is recited in the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana.

The four aims of existence in the different stages of life were then defined to be hermit life of education, homelife of preserving love and happiness, life of retirement from bustle and activity to become teachers to find out truth and teach students, and last though not least, the final emancipation of soul to rest in peace in the eternal soul. Statecraft was not then the material end of kingly life. Religion is the blessedness arising out of the knowledge of God, it is the sincere outcome of a belief in God. Modes of life beget modes of thought, actions and their growth to influence head and heart spiritually as well as physically. If one effaces God from his head and heart the world becomes desolate, and one commits suicide both physically and spiritually. Sublime are the temple steps of religion as the stars shine in the immeasureable sky above. Whatever is mighty in nature—storm, thunder, flood, volcanic eruption, death or annihilation—speaks of the power of God behind it.

Indian philosophy grew out of centuries of development, seldom contesting the original dogmas, which justified some kind of practical significance. The spiritual well being was at first conceived in self-control, and the philosophic wisdom was the spiritual nature above all desires and craving of blood and flesh. The experiences of the ascetics and wisdom of the Upanishads are incontestable. Sankaracharya, the greatest of all Vedantist scholars, urged that it being impossible to come to finality by logical reasons, which appeared so very differently to different angles of vision, it was better to depend on the Scriptures for the final ascertainment of truth. This made an opening for the Epics

* Professor A. B. Keith's "A History of Sanskrit Literature," Pages 479-80.

and Puranas to occupy a very high place in the Indian mind. The Devajajna and Pitrijajna of the Upanishads reveal the doctrines of emancipation and re-birth. A man of deeds is liable to re-birth, whereas the man of knowledge never returns to earth. The wise found it very convenient to explain away the inequalities of this life as results of the past life, without entertaining the untoward circumstances. The theory of deed or Karma, re-birth and emancipation introduced the fiction of the Epics and Hindu mythology. These dogmas found expression in the characters of the Epics with the recognised historical events and incidents to lend colour; as it were, to establish some sort of scientific truth with the actual experiences of the national heroes of the land so much loved and revered. But all these dogmas were challenged and replaced ultimately by the devotional ideal of another sect who were of spiritual enjoyment in Bhakti, like the altruistic goal of the Mahayan Buddhists.

Dr. Hopkins discussed the inter-relation of the two Indian Epics and is positively of the opinion that there are good reasons to support that the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana and the Bharata Samhita bear a close affinity. He says:—

"The common tales that remain, apart from this phase of the poems, are few, and such as may be easily attributed to the general stock of legendary tradition. When we have peeled off the outer layer (and in it are included with one exception, if it be an exception, all the references to Valmiki in the great Epic), we have left two epics, one of which is a complete whole, the other a congeries of incongruous stories grouped about a central tale: both built on the same foundation of phrase, and proverb and in part over the same ground of literary allusion: both with heroes of the same type (whose similarity is striking): and both arranged on the same general plan, a court scene, where the plot is laid, a period of banishment in a forest scene, followed by a city scene, where an ally is gained, and then by battle-scenes. One of these Epics claims priority, but the claim after all is not that the great poet invented Epic poetry, but that he first wrote an Epic in Sloka verse in a Kavya or artistic style. As the Ramayana is mainly in Slokas of a more refined style than the Mahabharata and the Kavya or artistic element is really much more pronounced, and as, further, it is highly probable that Epic poetry was first written in the mixture of rougher Sloka and tristubh characteristic of the Mahabharata, this claim, so stated, may in general be allowed, without impugning the relatively greater age of the other Epic. Professor Jacobi admits that the metre of the Ramayana is more refined, but the explanation he gives is that it was a product of that East where poetic art was first developed"*.

He says "Apantaratamas is called the Teacher of the Vedas ("termed by some Pracinagarbha");" and Narada knew the difference between Samkhya and Yoga, but he does not give any such place to Valmiki. Narada and Aparatama are the authors of the Bharata Samhita, as is evident from the Narayani section of the Mahabharata.

* Dr. Hopkins' "The Great Epic of India," Pages 78-79 and 97.

Dr. Hopkins has published books entitled "India Old and New" and "The Great Epic of India", giving his own views in a way only to ridicule the Ancient Indian Gods and their worshippers. It confirms the wisdom of the ancient seers in banning the reading of religious books by heretics.

One can hardly agree with the cogency of the arguments of a man whose main object has been to establish that the Christian ideal, legends and religion were not borrowed from any other religion of the East. For it is held that the life, events and miracles of Sri Krishna, Buddha, tally with those of Christ.

In the Rig Veda the divinity of speech (Vac) says that she elects whom she loves and makes him mighty. She is simply Saraswati, the deity of speech, which flows with eloquence like the tide of a river which is transparent, carries everything with it, quenches the thirst and moves the heart to exclaim with relief 'Ah' and makes the body cool. The eloquent argument of Western scholars like Dr. Hopkins would have been uttered with the triumphant voice of victory; had it not been for the fact that the geological history of a country is responsible for its religious and philosophical evolution and culture. The conditions under which gods and philosophy grew are no longer a matter of dispute, much less to scholars who have studied ancient Sanskrit literature and philology.

Myriads of ages have come and gone. Nowhere but in India the angry elements of Nature fight with such conspicuous ferocity as to create notions in the minds of people to ascribe divinity to natural forces. The deities of Ancient India in fish, tortoise, boar, lion-headed man, dwarf, axe-bearing Parasurama, bow-and-arrow-bearing Rama, plough-shouldering Balarama and last, though not least, loving hero of peace and divinity Sri Krishna to make the world realise the attributes of the meditative philosophic Narayana, were demonstrating different divisions of geological periods, Palaeozoic, Tertiary, etc. The primeval geological ages in the order of the theory of evolution is manifested in the Hindu Pouranic incarnations of God.

The Epics describe the great truth that the test proves the worth of a man, exposes his vice and brightens his virtue, for he who wins without resistance can hardly be credited with the glory of success. In conflict and adversity, when one gets the mastery of one's failings, a man proves his culture and wisdom. No one can employ himself better than in purifying his innate nature by culture and fortitude, as if regulated by the will and spirit of God in the silent working of the inner man. The conception of Narayana is the inner man of the universe

who was roused by the strong will of Brahma, the enlightened soul who seizes every external circumstance to work out the salvation of the body and soul to become a fitting example to the world of illusion, merged in sensual desires, jealousy, vanity and ambition and sinking daily to perdition. The greatest punishment of God seems to have been the infliction of ignorance and absence of reason and knowledge. The noblest and the worthiest are the objects of jealousy to the inferior class of men who are called the Asuras.

The Asuras and Devas were the divisions of human creation in the early prosperous days when all men were good, which was called the Satya Juga. It was not till the success of one created envy in the other that the unsuccessful, idle men of sensual pleasures nurtured in them envy, jealousy and insolence and became inclined to do wrong and mischief to others. Calumny they drink with greedy ears, insolence is the natural result of prosperity, and jealousy and envy are the outcome of the uncultured mind. The ill-omened curses of ignorance took possession of the sons of the same father Kasyapa for want of culture and education. They did not inherit virtue and vice from their father, it was their own creation. It is the curse of a family, the curse of a nation, when the majority of men suffer from vanity and vacation of spirit. Then war and fighting become inevitable. This is depicted in the early three Parvas of the Mahabharata. With the description of the war between the Devas and Asuras, which resulted in the victory of the Devas, the Bharata Samhita began.

Many Vedic matters actually formed part of the Bharata Samhita, but were incorporated in the Mahabharata in such a vague manner that Western scholars conclude that the three Parvas—Paushya, Poulama and Astika—lie outside the scope of the Mahabharata proper.

Samjaya and Soumatri (Lakshman) are the two important characters anciliary to the heroes to develop the theme of the two Epics. In Panchavimsa Brahmana one finds mention of these two names in the chant relating to the victory of the Devas and Asuras and the death of a female Asura who used to lick off all the soma by Sumitra. The great hero Lakshman, the son of Sumitra, was called Saumitri, and cut the nose of the sister of Ravana when she made love overtures to Soumatri, which was the cause of the fight in the Ramayana. Samjaya played a very important part in the Kuru Court. Saumitra killed the invincible son of Ravana, who defeated the king of Heaven Indra and was distinguished by the name Indrajit. The Saumitra chant in the Panchavimsa Brahmana is a wish-granting chant. It runs thus:—

"The Gods and the Asuras made a compact that cattle should fall to the share of that of the two (contending) parties, which should vanquish (the other). By

means of the Samjaya (-saman) the Gods vanquished the Asuras. Because they had vanquished (the other) (samajayan), therefore, it is the samjaya. The Samjaya (-saman) is applied for gaining cattle. (7) ...... There is the Saumitra (-saman) (the chant of Sumitra). (8) ... .. A (certain) female, sacrifice-destroying ogre Dirghajibvi, kept here licking at the (butter of the) sacrifices. Indra despaired of slaying her by any stratagem whatever. Now, Sumitra, the Kutsa was a handsome (young man). To him he (Indra) said :—'Call her to thee'. He called her to him. She said to him: 'This truly is unheard by me, but it is rather pleasant to my heart'. He (Sumitra) came to an understanding with her. At the trysting-place they both (Indra and Sumitra) slew her. That forsooth, has been at that moment their wish. The Saumitra (-saman) is a wish-granting chant. Through this (saman) he obtains (the fulfilment of) his wish. (9) ...... (But) an (inauspicious) voice addressed him (Sumitra) thus: 'Being Sumitra ('good-friend') thou hast done a bloody deed'. Grief tormented him; he performed austerities, he saw this Saumitra (-saman). Through it he drove away his grief. He who, in lauding, has applied the Saumitra (-saman), drives away his grief."*

These are part and parcel of the Bharata Samhita and Samjaya and Saumitra chants and prove the origin of the Epics from the Vedic hymns, with which the Bharata Samhita was so closely related. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana did not evolve out of the Bharata Samhita and embodied the rationalistic revolution of the later ages. The Bharata Samhita was a book which related the fight between the Devas and Asuras and the Vedic gods acknowledged Narayana as their Father and Creator of the Universe, whereas the Indian Epics describe the feats of the illustrious kings and their priests with incarnations of Narayana in Rama and Krishna, etc. They belong to distinct periods of time and describe the manners, customs and religion of distinct centres.

* Pancavimsa Brahmana, Page 328.

NARAYANA.

Narayana used to be invoked at the outset of an undertaking and the Indian Epics and Puranas have done it invariably. Even Sankaracharya, the most celebrated exponent of the Adwaita Vedanta, followed the practice in his great commentary on the Shrimad Bhagwad Gita. But it is very unfortunate that the well-known Narayana invocation Sloka has often been misinterpreted and misconstrued, and many great students of the Indian Epics have been misled by it. The commentator Nilkantha, however, is correct, and the great book Srimad Bhagabata very clearly enunciated the true meaning of the invocation Sloka in question.*

It is said that the Vedas, the Epics and the Puranas were all handed down by tradition and the Hindus religiously followed them. The Hindus hear from their astrologers very short accounts of their past history from the very Satya-Juga, with the names of gods and great kings they worshipped and the prophecy of the coming events of the New Year, on the New Year's day every year with a religious devotion and faith. This is the best of all traditions and in it the worship of Narayana is declared in the Satya-Juga and no other gods are mentioned. The names of the famous ancient kings of Satya-Juga are Baibasvata Manu, Ikshaku, Bali, Prithu, Mandhata, Pururaba, Dhundhumar and Kartabirjyarjuna.

Time has been divided by Ancient Indian sages into the distinct divisions of Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali ages, but having regard to the fact that the Epics and Puranas published accounts of men and events, making kings and sages of Satya and Treta contemporary with those of Dwapara and Kali, one can hardly look upon these divisions as correct and convincing. This may be said also about the different cycles of Manu, and the intelligent Brahmins invented the legend of an untimely deluge "Akalika Prolaya" in the first cycle of time, Swambhuva Manantaraya, in which Kapila, the founder of the Samkhya School of Philosophy flourished.

The great sage Kapila requested his grandfather, Swambhuva Manu, to grant him a region where he could pursue his rationalistic enquiries,

* Narayana is superior to the inexpressible and of the universe has emanated from the inexpressible. All these worlds and the earth of seven islands consist in the embryo of the universe.

but the great progenitor refused him this prayer, saying that he could pursue it anywhere he liked. His great contemporary sages were each connected with a particular school of Vedic learning, but Kapila was unconnected with any, and this is what is sought to be brought out by this legend, and hence Kapila laid Svyambhuva under a curse by which he deluged the world with a flood from which it was finally rescued by Brahma through the assistance of Narayana. This legend probably refers to the evolution of the cult of Narayana worship.*

The Kalika Purana, an important book recording all the details of that deluge, describes Kapila as the author of an untimely deluge which submerged the world. The word Akalika (Untimely) Pralaya cannot refer to the natural phenomenon of flood, but refers to the great intellectual ferment which Kapila caused among all classes of men. In fact, his doctrines were so revolutionary that the Brahmins were, at first, at their wits' end to adjust their mode of life with his new philosophy. He stands between the old age of materialism, reflected in the worldliness of sacrifices, and the new school of idealism, which is contemporaneous with the promulgation of the esoteric metaphysics of the Upanishads.

Yet the school of Kapila is Brahmanic. He gave a new definition of the word 'Brahmana', who according to the older view was a mutterer of Vedic hymns and who performed and supervised sacrifices. But the new Brahman is one who has become a part of the Brahma, the supreme soul through the sacrifice of self.

The legend of Kapila throws much light on Narayana worship. Nilkantha, the great commentator of the Mahabharata, bore out the great Kapila's theory in explaining the Narayana invocation Sloka of the Mahabharata and said that the Sloka in question was the composition of Vyasa himself, who incorporated the Bharata Samhita into the Mahabharata.

The god is remembered as Narayana in the beginning of the world; it is compounded of the words—"Nara" and "Ayana"; (The compound word means one who enters into Nara, a name of the Brahmanda, *i.e.*, God, the creator of all.) Nara means—consciousness involved in illusion, *i.e.*, the individual. This Nara is being connoted by the word Narottama as he has the consciousness of an individual superior to the inanimate, Narayana, whose Self as the cause of all is superior to that individual. That supreme consciousness, the true knowledge of the infinite, is Brahma, and is the real Self beyond the universe of this illusioned individual; hence he has been reasonably described with an epithet Narottama. Nara is

* Kalika Purana Dvatrimsa Adhyaya.

intended to denote Brahmanda, whose place of rest and entrance are the all-pervading soul Narayana. Nara, who has been in unison with the human body created by his own illusion, is called Jiba.

The word Narottama denotes that he realises the supreme Brahma, 'bowing unfailingly down to that goddess of speech, Saraswati, who illuminates the true knowledge of the Narottama, Nara and Narayana' and the book styled Jaya or Bharata could vanquish the receding illusory world, making one free from worldly desires. The word Jaya is used in the sense to confer victory in human pursuit of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, the ultimate goal of humanity to realise divinity. After bowing down to that Narayana and Nara, that supremely merciful divine speech entered into a book called Jaya for the knowledge of the people. The glory of the son of Parasara, the limit of whose kindness cannot be expressed, lay in his trying to unveil the mystery of the fourteen branches of learning in such a manner as to be accessible to the mediocre and the dullard, with a view to reform their evil inclinations by opening the flood-gates of religious piety through examples from the past history of Indian civilisation.

Nara and Narottama mean that guide of men who can perfect the body and soul together by his own example. The heroes and heroines of the two great Indian Epics, whom the Purana styled with the distinct name of Jaya, illustrate the perfect men and women who were translated to heaven as incarnations of the attributes or limbs of religion if not of God Himself.

Narayana the all-pervading universal soul, however, should not be confounded with the sage Narayana, the composer of the Rig Veda Purusha Sukta (Rv. X, 90), whom the author of the Chronology of Ancient India wrongly alleges to be the son of Nara. The Chaitanya Charitamrita, the greatest philosophical work in Bengali by Kaviraj Krishna Das, the authoritative mouthpiece of the Chaitanya School of Philosophy, describes the real conception of Narayana in a dialogue between Krishna and Brahma.

Brahma says : "Art thou not Narayana? I am giving thou the reasons why thou art Narayana. Thou art the soul—the root of all beings in the creations both real and illusory. As earth is the material cause of all earthen wares, so art thou the cause of all beings - in thee does rest everyone. The word 'Nara' means, the sum of all entities and 'Ayana' means that which they dwell in. Hence it follows that thou art the ultimate abode of all (Mula Narayana). This is one aspect of the argument and let me present to thee the other one. The incarnations such as Purusha, etc., are the Lords of beings ; but as regards majesticity Thou art far superior to them. Hence it follows that Thou art the ultimate Lord and source of all. With Thy power do they protect the worlds. Hence the original Narayana art Thou and none else. Oh my glorious Lord, let me present to thee another aspect of the argument. Infinite is the number of Brahmandas (ब्रह्माण्ड) and Vaikunthas (वैकुण्ठ) and

Thou art the witness, conscient of the spirit of all the acts that are performed in three periods by the inhabitants of these infinite worlds. As thou presidest so the worlds exist. None can move or exist unless it be presided over by Thee. As Thou presidest over the causes of all beings Thou art the supreme Lord (Mula Narayana)".

Krishna argues: "Brahma, I do not follow you. That Narayana (whom you speak of) dwells in the ocean like soul of beings."

Brahma replies: "It is true that those Narayanas who live in the ocean like souls of beings, are merely Thy parts. The three Narayanas, namely, the one who lies in the ocean of primary causes, the other who lies in the ocean of milk and the other who lies in the primeval waters created with the help of illusion (मावा) and hence they appertain to it (मावा). These three kinds of dwellers in the waters are cognisant of all hearts and the one who is called Purusha is the soul of the Universe. The one who lies in the primeval waters is the soul of Hiranyagarbha (the golden embryo of the universe). He who lies in the ocean of milk is conscious of the hearts of individual beings. Illusion, however small it may be, can be traced in the observances of these three Narayanas, but Krishna, who is the fourth in relation to them, is entirely bereft of illusion (Here Kaviraj Goswami has borne out his statement by a quotation from Swami Sridhara's commentary on the sixteenth verse, beginning with 'Narayana, who is called the fourth' of the Srimad Bhagawat Chapter 15, Book II where the Swami has stated in a verse 'The Virat (विराट) the Hiranya Garbha and the Karana are the different attributes of the supreme Lord. What is different from those three attributes is His real self'). Though those three utilise illusion yet they are not the least influenced by it. They all are above illusion. (Here the author confirms himself by a quotation from the Srimad Bhagawat, Chapter II, Book I where Suta is addressing Saunaka and others, saying, 'Here lies the majesticity of the Lord that like the understanding that dwells in Him. He is not entangled in the attributes of illusion but always holds His own') As thou art the ultimate abode of those three, what doubt there then can be that Thou art the final Narayana? Narayana of the Parabyoman (superior sphere) whose parts are these three is but a kind of manifestation of Thine. Thou therefore, constitutest the final Narayana."

The explanation propounded represents the view-point of the greatest teacher of the age, Chaitanya, who realised the teachings of the great Vyasa and by his own light explained the word "Love" (প্রেম) to his disciples in the easiest method possible. The author of Chaitanya Charitamrita is the well-known interpreter of his views and is universally accepted as an authority on the Chaitanya philosophy.

Unfortunately this Sloka has been utilised to identify Nara and Narayana with Arjuna and Vasu-Deva, respectively, which is not the real meaning. The word "Nara" means the Supreme being from which water is said to have flowed. The word "Narayana" means the supreme being in repose on the hood of Vasuki, the snake-god, in the midst of eternal water. This symbolism is deeply connected with the metaphysical speculations of the Aryans regarding the functions of the active principles of life, the theory of creation and the attributes of divinity. It is in this light that the words are explained in Manu Samhita, Bhagabata and later Puranas (Manu Samhita, 1st Chapter, 10 verse).

"The water is called Nara, inasmuch as it is the first offspring of Nara (the supreme self), and inasmuch as water was the first receptacle of the Supreme Self, manifested as Brahma, the Supreme Self is called Narayana (10)."

The identification of "Nara" and "Narayana" with Arjuna and Vasu-Deva was inevitable when the heroes of the Epic came to be described as Avatars of gods in Pouranic style, inspite of this being quite against the Vedic conception of Godhead (Taittriya Aranya, Anubak 13, 5th Rik).

The great Sage Narada is said to have been a Divine minstrel who composed Hari-Gita and was the instructor of the Epic makers like Valmiki and the author of Puranas, and the significance of his advising Veda Vyasa and the illustrious kings as to how they should console themselves by casting away their grief can only refer to the spiritual message of the Mahabharata enunciated in the first invocation Sloka and amplified in the Narayana section of the current Mahabharata.

The fact that Santanu heard it from Narada, as Bhisma told Yudhisthira in the Narayana Section and Vyasa related to Yudhisthira, would go far to prove the thesis that the Bharata Samhita, divorced from the legends which grew round the conflict between the Kurus and the Pandavas, had been in existence from a long time past. One fact is quite clearly brought out in the current Mahabharata, and this is that the original nucleus of the Epic was quite distinct from the present version in which primary importance is given to the story of the war between the Kurus and the Pandavas, which has been so powerfully developed on almost dramatic lines in it. The Epic kernel of the Mahabharata as well as the Ramayana belonged to the age of the Svayambhuva Manu, to which the great sages such as Kapila and Bhrigu belonged.

Kapila is said to have killed the sixty thousand sons of Sagara, the well-known Ikshaku King of Ayodhya, who had come in search of the sacrificial horse of their father. It is quite evident from this that the author of the intellectual revolution did not confine himself to mere words but that he acted up to his principles in preventing the actual performance of the horse sacrifice by seizing the sacrificial horse of the powerful Kshatriya King Sagara. This was further developed in the legend of Bhagiratha, who caused the river Ganges to flow through the region of the Royal Saint Jahnu of North Panchala into the sea across the plains of Lower Bengal. This act of supreme benefaction to the people of Bengal should not be dismissed as purely legendary. It is evident that this legend contains a great historical truth. The Yajnas were connected with great irrigational works.

"Having penances for wealth, the Rishi brought the River Ganga, who had gone to Kailas, to that spot. Indeed, Ganga appeared, piercing through the waters of the lake .. ...The lake was penetrated by that river. And as that celestial river, piercing through the waters of the lake, appeared, it flowed on, under the name of Sarayu." (Annushasana Parva, Chapter CLV, Slokas 23 and 24). "Utathva said, —O Saraswati, do you become invisible here. Indeed, O timid lady, leaving this region, go you to the desert. O auspicious goddess, let this region, destitute of you, cease to become sacred." (Anuushasana Parva, Chapter CLIV, Slokas 26/27).

The rivers were looked upon with very great veneration as great benefactors of humanity and eevntually became sacred in the eyes of the Hindus. The Vedic Yajnas were to a large extent undertaken for the purpose of reclamation of wild lands for settlement by the Aryan sages, and this certainly necessitated large irrigation works. Thus the name of Kapila is connected not only with the great philosophical doctrine but also with a great work of public utility. Sagara was instrumental in excavating that portion of South Bengal which later on became the estuary of the River Bhagirathi or the Jahnabi through the irrigational works of his descendants undertaken at the instance of Kapila for the deliverance of the cursed sons of Sagara, *i.e.*, the people of Lower Bengal.

Kapila occupies a very prominent position in the development of Aryan thought as the rationalistic founder of the great Samkhya system of philosophy. He challenged and overthrew "the monistic theory of the early Upanishads which identified the individual soul with Brahma." His teaching is entirely dualistic, admitting only two things, without beginning or end, but specially different matter on the one hand, and infinite plurality of individual souls on the other. "An account of the nature and the mutual relation of these two forms, is the main content of the system." (Macdonnell's "History of Sanskrit Literature," Page 390).

What his system was in its application to daily life and the performance of animal sacrifices has been already adverted to. Between the thesis of the Brahmanic priests and the antithesis of the Kshatriyas represented in the early school of Upanishads, the school of Kapila seemed to establish a compromise. The point of view of the orthodox school ably put forward by Syuma Rashmi appeared so palpably unreasonable in view of the rise of the Upanishadic school of thought that, after a time, the Brahmins became grateful to Kapila for having given the discredited Brahmins a higher moral and spiritual value than they had actually possessed.

If a historical parallel to this new development of Indian thought is sought, it may be found in the mighty dispute which took place in Europe between justification by Acts and justification by Faith at the time of the Protestant revolution.

The seizure of the sacrificial horse of Sagara by Kapila may be compared to the nailing of the 95 thesises on the Church Gate of Wittenberg by Martin Luther. The philosophy of Kapila was, however, much more spiritual and profound than that of the German Reformer. Like him, however, Kapila opened the flood-gates of revolutionary thought, which swept away the whole Vedic philosophy in the tide of rationalism of which the semi-atheistic Buddhism was one of the products. But the Brahmans found in the new philosophy of Kapila a resting point from which they could beat back the onslaughts of Kshatriya mysticism. The definition which he gave of the Brahmanas superseded its earlier meaning and still clings to them, though in practice, the duties of this order are not very different from what they were in early Vedic times. The rationalistic cloak which the Brahmins got from Kapila has stood them in good stead and enables them to stand four-square against any offensive directed against their social position.

The age in which Kapila flourished coincided in point of time with the early period of Upanishadic mysticism, which was provoked by the excessive greediness on the part of the Brahmins, who constantly urged the kings to perform sacrifices at which the former charged ruinous fees. It was a period of sacrifices and the early Upanishads and the system of Kapila both grew out of them. The early Upanishads contested the view that performance of sacrifices could lead to heaven. Kapila in his practical code of ethics, however, sanctioned sacrifices, but denounced the charging of fees by the priests. Thus he threw upon the offerers of the sacrifices the task of providing the priests with their necessaries of life. He condemned the repetition of formulas as useless and as going against the early Vedic practices. He was also opposed to the practice of penances for mistakes committed in the performance of sacrifices.

Kapila did not, however, forsee the danger of rationalism to the existing social structure. His emphasis on the life of renunciation through knowledge caused a tendency to break it up, as it did at the hands of the Buddha much later on. But for the time being the Brahmins heaved a sigh of relief. They found that if they could admit the system of Kapila, they could meet their Kshatriya opponents on a surer rationalistic ground. It was for this reason that the Brahmins accepted the system of Kapila and pitched it against the mysticism of the Kshatriyas.

Kapila was a contemporary of king Sagara and Uddalaka Aruni was a contemporary of Kalmasapada and Janmejoya I. Between them there intervened about ten or eleven generations.

The School of Narada and Vyasa, with the help of which Vedic practices were resuscitated in a desirable form, became the starting point of a compromise between the orthodox and the new school of thought. There cannot be any doubt that this happy synthesis was the philosophical background of the Bharata Samhita. In this connection it will be worth while to advert to the fables of the Bharata Samhita on which the giant structure of the Mahabharata was built. The birth of Narayana's carrier (Bahana) Garuda, for wreaking vengeance on Indra, is given in Astika Parva. It is said that Indra laughed at the Balakhilla Rishis when they were collecting Palash branches for the sacrifice of the well-known sage Kasyapa. The story of Gajendra Moksham in the Astika Parva is considered to be the prologue of the great Epic, the Mahabharata. It is the story of Garuda's releasing of the fighting elephant and tortoise, who were two Brahmin brothers in their previous birth and had been converted into these beasts by their mutual curses but could not forget their old quarrel and were continuing it in their present birth too. They were released from their mortal coils, when they could not extricate themselves and thought of God Narayana in their dire distress. In their death struggle the elephant prayed to God Narayana for deliverence and Garuda carried the fighting beasts and ate them up.

The Bala-Khilyas, who were hanging on the branch of a tree with their heads downwards, were carried by Garuda to a place in the Himalayas where they were left unmolested on surer ground. From the legend about them in the Mahabharata it was quite palpable that they were really the objects of ridicule in it, but were eventually provided with a better and respectable place where the gods dwell. It is well-known that the Khilas represented a later stratum of Rigvedic poetry. "The word 'Khilas' means 'supplement'". This name in itself indicates that they were texts which were collected and added to the Samhita only after the latter had already been concluded. Some of them were very early compositions. The eleven Vala-Khilya hymns which are found at the end of Book VIII were supplements of this type. These are the so-called Dana-Sruti or praises of gifts, panegyrics commemorating the liberality of princes towards the priestly singers employed by them. That these Vala-Khilyas were a body of recluses given to much worldliness is borne out by the Bhagavata Purana (3rd Skanda, 12th Chapter) where they are described as one of the four orders of anchorites who retained or stored their food and did not give it up till they got fresh food.

The Astika Parva (Adi Parva, Chapter 45) and Bana Parva (Chapter 96) of the Mahabharata make it clear that Jaratkaru and Astika were no other then Agastya and his son Dridhshyau, *alias* Illabaha.

The identity of Jaratkaru with Agastya would be evident if the account, in Adi Parva, Chapter 45, of Jaratkaru seeing his ancestors hanging head downwards over a big hole and being exhorted by them to liberate them by marrying and producing a son and his carrying out their wish, and the account, in Bana Parva, Chapter 96, of Agastya seeing his ancestors hanging head downwards over a hole and being exhorted by them to produce a son and his carrying out their wish, are read together; and the identity of Astika too with Illabaha would be further clear if the derivation of the name Illabaha (*i.e.*, carrier of fuels for Vedic sacrificial rites) be compared with that of the name Astika (*i.e.*, believer in Vedic religion and rites) (*vide* Bana Parva, Chapter 99 and Astika Parva, Chapter 15).

En passant, the student of the Epics might profitably also compare the name Illabaha with the name Illa, the progenitor of the Indian kings and the name Illabrita, the place where Illa lived with Buddha, as also with the name Illabila, mother of Kuvera, the deity or demon presiding over wealth.

The place where Lopamudra was married to Agastya was where the rivers, Saraswati and Chamasa, met. Dhaumya describes the Agastya shrine and his hermitage as a shrine of Baruna. Agastya was the famous chastiser of the Asuras against whom the Devas were advised by Narayana to seek his help. The destruction of Batapi and the invulnerable associates of Britta, the Kalkeyas, was accomplished by Agastya. It was he who drove the enemies of the Aryans from the summit of the Vindhya ranges to Southern India, which is allegorically referred to as his stopping the overgrowth of that mountain over the path of the Sun, and saved the extermination of the Nagas through the ability of his son in the snake sacrifice of Janmejoya. Agastya's great mission of making the Nagas peaceful and civilised was not fulfilled in his life-time, but his son succeeded, and this was allegorically referred to in the stopping of the war of Naga-extermination by Janmejoya in his snake sacrifice undertaken by the Sukra family, who bore a great grudge against the Nagas as referred to in the Astika Parva.

Sumukha, the son of the king of the Nagas, was married to Gunakeshi, the daughter of Indra's charioteer, Matali, and this explains why Indra espoused the cause of the Nagas, his charioteer's relations, when they were threatened with destruction by Janmejoya's snake sacrifice. But the Nagas, inspite of their friendship by the marriage alliance with the charioteer of Indra, could not protect their king Takshaka, who was about to be drawn into the flames of Janmejoya's

sacrifice, when it was the Narayana worshipper Astika, the son of Agastya, who saved them by asking for a gift from the king in the same way as Bamana, the dwarf Avatar of Narayana, had done for driving Bali from Heaven.

From this it will appear that both Kapila and Agastya were followers of the Narayana cult. Agastya's meeting with Rama, the great hero of the Ramayana and his supplying Rama with the weapon with which he ultimately killed Ravana, are very significant, as is also the important part Agastya played in the destruction of the Kalkeya. And it is significant that heroes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are all represented as Narayana worshippers.

It is well-known that the Dravidians were the tree and serpent worshippers of India, and when the Aryans came to know them, it was not as enemies or conquerors, but rather as their instructors, and for that the great Agastya was deified as Tamir Muni, whom the Tamil race identify with Canopus, the brighter star in the Southern Heaven. He played a very important part in both the Indian Epics. To him and his disciples the Dravidians owed much. It was Agastya who wrote the first Tamil Grammar, which is now obsolete, but the grammar written by his personal disciple Tholka-painir, is read up to this day by students of Shen Tamil. Agastya's family was thus lost to the Aryabarta, and it is said that the Dravidians form one of the great groups of early peoples of India who were never entirely displaced from their original home in Southern India.

Both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata preached the Narayana cult in preference to the Vedic gods. The invocation Sloka contains reference to Saraswati, the goddess of flowing speech and sacred rivers.

The most beneficent and delectable gifts of Nature in India are rivers, mountains and fertile fields full of food, drink and minerals. The old seers lavished upon their names epithets full of poetic significance. The main rivers with their tributaries flowing down from the icy pinnacles piercing the very heavens fulfil a great function in the economic life of the country, the importance of which one can hardly exaggerate. The rivers of India not only perform the important work of fertilising the soil but they add to it, tearing down mountain sides in their rapid flow and bearing with them loads of earth and debris of rocks, for ultimate deposit on the plains.

The fertile soil of the river plains affords vast potential wealth. Agriculture has been the chief industry in India and the incarnation of God Balaram, Krishna's brother, is represented as carrying a plough

as the best instrument to establish peace amongst nations fighting for economic solutions, and the heroine of the Ramayana is represented as coming out from the furrow of the agricultural field. Sita was a Vedic character and was subsequently adopted in the Epic. It is said that the Brahman sages taught what they heard from the mouth of God Narayana, who recovered the Veda from the possession of the Asuras after slaying them, and thus the Veda was preached. The traditional seven seers of Ancient India were the advance guards of Indian civilisation and are respected and honoured even now by offerings of water to them as progenitors of the Hindu race and religion.

Like all ancient races the Indo-Aryans were a nomadic tribe and they were patriarchal in their earliest systems of society and government. The chieftain of a clan or the father of a family was at once the warrior and the priest. By degrees the gifted families who learned the Vedas and composed hymns became the guides and instructors of the general public and their chiefs or kings. One whose prayer was successful was called a Brahman and those who chanted the appropriate hymns and offered sacrifices to provide against untoward events were Brahmans. As rains and drought were very important for agriculture, Indra was worshipped as the God of clouds, Agni as the God of fire, Varuna as Dyavspitar and the encompassing sky and so on. The original Rig Veda contains not only the hymns to those gods, but also the story of a fight between the Devas and the Asuras, between Viswamittra, a representative of the Royal warrior class, and Vasistha, the Aryan sage from whom was descended the reviser of the Bharata Samhita, which formed the nucleus of both the Indian Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

The Vedic hymns, handed down through many generations in unbroken succession from mouth to mouth, were respected as the most valuable body of oral traditions in existence. Even now there are Brahmans who can repeat from memory the whole of the Vedic verses which they learnt in their childhood. The destructive climate of India and the constant fights amongst the clans made the human mind the safest repository of these Vedic hymns and they were thus justly considered to have emanated from the mouth of the maker of the world, who resides inside the human frame and is in a way the director and retainer of human knowledge and culture.

The Hindus divided time according to the phases of the moon. The sacred Zend Avesta of the Ancient Persians attributes the final dispersion of the Aryan family to some great natural cataclysm which brought about a disastrous change of climate at the site of their ancient

home. It is said that they advanced upon the road of knowledge and culture through the narrow defiles of the Himalayas and descended upon the northern plains of Hindustan. Philological researches succeeded in lifting the veil and throwing important light upon the habits and customs of the Ancient Indo-Aryan family. They used horses, oxen, dogs, goats, and cows in their domestic and social life and used ploughs, boats and carts. The Rig Veda illumines briefly the religious beliefs social and family customs of the people. They knew the use of weapons of iron, bow and arrow, and were conversant with the art of weaving. The woman was respected as the founder and propagator of the race.

The Vedic religion in its earliest phase originated in the simple and child-like reverence of the healthy primitive mind of the Aryans for the various manifestations of Natural forces, whom it sought to propitiate and to whom prayers were addressed. These prayers were extemporised at different times and on different occasions by the Vedic sages and uttered in a voice suited to the occasion which gave rise to the hymns. The phonetic modulation was well adapted to the sentiment which the hymn provoked: Fear, admiration, desire and exultation, each has a corresponding natural sound which was reproduced in the utterances of the hymn embodying it. The sounds Udatta, Unudatta, etc., are copied from Nature, and therefore great importance was attached to correct pronunciation.

When the particular objects for which the Vedic hymns were composed, were attained by the composers, they were held in great esteem and evoked a sort of special sanctity. Thus great importance came to be attached also to correct and exact reproductions of these hymns, which were supposed to superinduce results which had attended their first recital. At first, however, as is natural with early beliefs, meditation of the inner meaning of the hymn with closed eyes was practised. But Vedic hymns were not only prayers but contained the accumulated wisdom of the race.

The icy, white-coloured mountain ranges, surrounded by mighty water courses, were the abode of the ancient seers and were described as the white island. They lay unexplored and uncomprehended by the ignorant inhabitants of the plains below, and to them appeared as the abode of the gods, emancipated seers and departed ancestors. Over the wide expanse of the Indian Ocean, the air came laden with moisture. The land around the sea discharged its stored up heat from its breast and drew, by the heavenly mechanism of winds, the life-giving moisture-laden air from the sea. These are what we call the South-West monsoon, the soft humid wind, blowing up from the Indian Ocean and carrying with it the means of livelihood for millions. The

causes and mechanism of the Indian monsoons are very complex, and on them Indian agriculture has depended from time immemorial. All these impressed the ancient Aryan sages to worship the elements of Nature as so many gods, and to fix the place of the Creator in the vast limitless ocean or the ice-clad white island, the inaccessible Himalayan peaks. The scenery of the river plains or the ocean coasts with the rising and setting sun seemed very attractive to the imagination of the cultured Aryans. The vivid contrast of the two daily scenes of day and night symbolised as it were their own birth and death. The Creator who conceived them and carried them out like clock-work "could not but impress the oriental mind to worship the ocean and rivers as His incarnations."

> "Like some grave mighty thought
> Threading a dream"

The mountain ranges and rivers flowing in the great Gangetic plains are separated from Southern India by a range of hills and table land, the Vindhyas, below which the vast region of the Deccan with its flowing rivers contains some scenes of the most exquisite natural beauty, which made the life of exile of the great hero of the Ramayana enjoyable, and made the great heroine Sita dream of her past life after she had returned to her palace. The rhapsodists won popular applause by describing that Ram Chandra on that account exiled Sita a second time to set at rest the scandal talked of by his ignorant subjects. But the Eastern and the Western scholars discard the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana, which shows the exile of Sita, on this ground as not a part of the original Ramayana. Uttarakanda formed a part of the Bharata Samhita. In the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana the great sage Kapila is mentioned as God Narayana Himself*.

That the Uttarakanda is an earlier work to which the Ramayana was a supplement is not generally understood. The priority of Uttarakanda had been obscured by the introduction of the theme of Sita's exile, which must necessarily have taken place after she had been recovered from the hands of Ravana, but it is very clear from the internal evidence of the Uttarakanda that in the method of treatment and in the substance there is a great deal of agreement between the Uttarakanda and the Bharata Samhita. The whole theme of the Mahabharata has heen treated by means of discourses. The same is the method of the Uttarakanda, but throughout the main text of the Ramayana, from Adikanda to Lanka-Kanda, the Epic style is followed. The themes of Narayana worship in the Uttarakanda and the Bharata Samhita is clearly traced and the great God Narayana is said to have revealed Himself to

* Ramayana Uttarakanda, Chapter 36, Slokas 13—19.

Narada in Svetadwipa, which is represented in both as being the stronghold of Narayana worship. The identity of themes and the style of narration followed in the Uttarakanda and the Narayana section of the Mahabharata clearly establish the fact that the base of the two Indian Epics is the same, and that the thesis proposed to be propounded by both is the same. One is thus driven to the examination of the substrata of both in order to fix the Uttarakanda as the base of the Epic of the Ramayana, and the Bharata Samhita as that of the Mahabharata.

The Bharata Samhita refers to a very ancient period with accounts of the kings mentioned in the Vedas. The inter-relation between the Uttarakanda and the Bharata Samhita is so close that one is tempted to believe that they might have been identical. The Bharata Samhita has admittedly undergone greater changes and got merged in the Mahabharata, and therefore the legends one comes across in the Bharata Samhita may be more clearly understood as to their synthetic form from their version in Uttarakanda than from the current Mahabharata. The legends which originally constituted the Bharata Samhita have been altered and scattered helter-skelter throughout the vast ocean of the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Puranas.

In these days of scientific enquiries and discoveries the intricate question of Godhead is no less interesting.

Narayana is addressed as the universal soul in Vedic literature. There are one hundred and eight authoritative Upanishads, which were enumerated as Garbho and Rama Upanishads in the discourses between Rama and his devotee Hanuman. Likewise, there are two Narayana Upanishads, one being thirteen times greater than the other. The smaller one contains quotations from all the four Vedic Upanishads, proving that everywhere Narayana is held to be the Universal soul. All the gods emanate from Him, including the twelve Adityas, eleven Rudras and eight Basus. All the Vedas sprang from Him and enter into Him. This is the essence of the Rig Vedic Upanishads. Narayana is eternal, who is within and without, in all directions, spotless, desireless, actionless, beautiful and single, having no one beside Himself. He who knows Him becomes Vishnu. May good be to all! The Sama-Vedic Upanishad follows thus :—

"Om" first, "namas" next and then Narayana, which altogether make eight vowels—(A. U. Ma='OM' two, 'Namas' two, and 5 in the last). One who minds this eight-voweled address lives upto his maximum age of longevity, pure in speech, becomes the lord of beings (Prajapati), the possessor of wealth, the owner of cows and finally attains immortality."

The last is from the Atharva Vedic Upanishads :—

"The essence of Pranava consist in letters 'A', 'U', and 'M' which is Brahma, all blessedness, the ultimate existence and the real self of all beings, by uttering which

the Yogis get emancipated from the worldly bondage of births and deaths, the cause of all worldly desires. He who practises the incantation, goes to Baikuntha. I bow down to Narayana who is represented in 'OM.'

"The white cloud of direct self-knowledge has the lustre of lightning, favourable to it is the lotus-eyed (Pundarikaskaha) and the unfalling Vishnu, the destroyer of Madhu, son of Devaki. Narayana is omnipresent in all beings, himself being one. He is not the cause himself but is the receptacle of causes. He is the ultimate reality denoted by 'OM'."

The Vedas were learnt, practised and correctly interpreted at the sacrifices, and when Narayana rescued the Veda from Madhu and Kaitabha, He was given the name of Hayagriba. It is quite natural that when the horse was esteemed as the most valuable of all possessions, people natually invested it with divine ottributes. The sun was represented in the horse and the sacrificers sat facing the direction in which the sun rose every day. The horse sacrifice became the greatest of all sacrifices, wherein the great God Narayana was worshipped from time immemorial.

In this world of flux and motion, where birth and death are mere passing phenomena, what could give man a sure feeling of eternity ?

God is revealed to man when he proceeds to the enquiry of the *raison d'etre* as to who has created him, for what purpose and what will be his end? These thoughts lead him to the conception and realisation of God-head. He discovers in Nature melodies from the murmuring of streams, the rustling of leaves, the sweet songs of birds and the humming of bees. He imitates the melodies of nature and composes hymns and poems embodied in the sounds of Udatta, Unudatta and Svarita. They represent sound which comes from the naval, the throat, the brain, and woven in a harmonious form by the last, *viz.*, the Pratitha. 'OM' is the holiest of words in Vedic literature, because it is a combination of 'A', 'U' and 'M', and which, if properly pronounced by a person, causes an inner enlightenment in his brain cells and transports him into a state of exultation in which he sees the reflection of the inner light which is visualised in the God-head. Gayatri or Savitri, the mother of Veda, consisting of 24 words, has the same esoteric and mystical significance. Thus when the Omnipotent Father is invoked through the sincere and feeling Vedic hymns, the devotee wants not only to secure his favours through them, but also tries to realise that the gods above have accepted the offerings made in the sacrifices.

With the progress of time these sacrifices became very popular religious and educational institutions, in which kings and sages acquired fame as patrons and instructors of learning and religion, and these sacrifices soon came to have a very great political and spiritual signi-

ficance. Efficient performers and initiators of these sacrifices became revered sages, thought capable of conferring boons on kings and to expiate their accumulated sins. They soon came to be distinguished by the titles of Maharshi, Brahmarshi and Debarshi, and kings and people paid them homage. Their words became laws, their blessings were eagerly sought to ensure success and victory and their curses were dreaded. They preached the supremacy of the same God Narayana over the Vedic gods. The origin of religion may be traced to the natural fear of death, to which man in his ignorance is subjected. It came to be generally believed that by good conduct, and religious observances and rites, he could attain prosperity and renown in the present world and heaven hereafter. He realised that the inner man, *i.e.*, the soul, is eternal, and that spiritual bliss can only be attained through the consciousness of the Paramatman, as it alone can confer on him eternal bliss. He can then face the world without fear, overcome sorrow and grief calmly and enjoy peace of mind even in the midst of the direst calamity, privation and misery. This is the cardinal doctrine on which the Vedas grew or were bifurcated from the one Veda.

God speaks in the books of religion of all nations. In the Bible the Almighty, like the sound of many waters, spoke in clear and piercing tones above the stormy tumults and the people at the foot of the mountain heard His voice in fear and trembling. This fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Fear itself is inherent in childhood. It tends to keep one out of danger. A child loves its mother, and fears to offend her or to disobey her wishes. Parents create a certain amount of fear in their children in order to save them from being foolhardy. The thunder and lightning, the ocean and tempest, create in man a certain amount of fear, and he prays to God to save his life. The fear of death subjects mankind to a sort of bondage. There is a wholesome fear of God which prevents a man from doing wrong lest it displease the great God. Pushed to extremes, this fear led many people to sacrifice whatever they considered dear to them and they even used to inflict corporal punishments on themselves, wounding their own persons, to appease the wrath of the Almighty Father. It induced reverence and kept one from undue familiarity with the divine God and from presumption on God's mercy.

The Divine minstrel Narada claims the first place in the Hindu world of religion by reason of his unprecedented devotion and religious fervour and austerity as the accredited messenger of heaven. It is he who sang to the accompaniment of his lyre the praise of God, which Vedic sages used to do before him by the three different sounds called Udatta, Unudatta and Svarita. Chanting of Vedic hymns was very

difficult and it took 12 years to complete the course of study (*Vide* Manu Chapter 3. 1).

The 12 years sacrifice of the great teacher Saunaka at the sacred Naimisharanya represents the ancient Hindu University, where the pupils saw how their teachers performed the sacrifices and, impressed with their religious fervour, learnt the difficult pronunciations of Vedic hymns from practical lessons. It was there that the scriptures o' the Hindu religion were drawn up in consultation with the great teachers under the name of the great man who divided the Vedas for the convenience of his pupils and the performers of religious ceremonies and sacrifices, and who was distinguished by the name of Vyasa (which means divider). So great was the influence of the name Vyasa that all the Hindu books of religion were ascribed to him and were said to have been composed in the great university of Saunaka, who was the great Vedic scholar and grammarian and the first indexer of the Vedas and became very celebrated. Eventually the site of the great university of Saunaka at Naimisharanya Forest, became the shrine of the Hindus and there are many traditions about the origin of its name.

All the places where Vedic ceremonies were performed came to be named after their distinguished performers. The names of Naimisharanya and Kurukeshttra owed their origin to the names of the kings of the Royal family, Nimi and Kuru, and the place at the confluence of the three sacred rivers of the Hindus where very many sacrifices were performed, became distinguished by the name of Prayag (Allahabad). The source of all the important Indian rivers is the sacred mountains of the Himalayas, which are always covered with snow, and the sun shining on the melting snow made them appear like an island of a white colour and they were described as the Swetadwipa, the abode of the great Creator, Narayana. The Vedic gods could not continue to hold their own with the progress of time. The early Hindu religion sprang from the love and reverence towards parents, dead or living. The few gods who came to be regarded as such were those presiding over nature and natural phenomena. The law of universal obligation was transformed into the law of God. The man who observed that law of God developed a god-like character and was thought to be the means of God's revelation to man. Such a man was Narada, and Vyasa was his pupil. The inspired visions of ages continued to be ascribed to one man Veda Vyasa. Belief and trust in one God and one teacher, who became so famous, helped materially to elevate the life of a nation and to transform the sinful into healthy and holy characters.

The Bharata Samhita was conceived by the Vedic sage known as Narayana, and the divine minstrel Narada, who sang hymns in Vedic

metre and language in praise of that superman who conceived the idea of creation and laid down rules of preservation and destruction and their inter-relation in the system of creation and resurrection. All men were created equals and they were endowed by the great Creator with certain inalienable fundamental rights. To secure the growth and fulfilment of these rights, society was founded and rules were laid down by the elders, who derived their power from the passive obedience of the people to them. This was the state of things in the pre-university days depicted in the Paushya Parva of the Mahabharata. In the Poulama Parva the family life of the great teachers of the day was depicted and in the Astika Parva, their influence with the kings and the great Vedic god Indra was shown.

The kings and priests were ideals of ancient Hindu religion and morality and they were no respecters of persons or deities, however great, but taught the way of God in truth. At the high altar of the Hindu sacrifices, sermons were elucidated by examples and oral traditions, and statutes were promulgated to create good fellowship between all men with an eye to the public weal. The essence of ancient civilisation seemed to have been to practise proper restraint in all spheres of life in order to prevent any sort of encroachment upon the rights of others. Four social orders or caste systems were evolved when the conflicting interests of various classes clashed with one another, distinctly assigning different functions to each of them according to their ability, learning and culture, and not according to birth alone. It was a time to which the well-known line fittingly applied :

> "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's ; and they marvelled at Him."

The Hindu teachers and expounders of truth had not to experience the cruel fates of Jeremiah in being thrown into an Egyptian pit, Daniel into the den of lions, Saul of Tarus in getting thirty-nine bleeding stripes, Wycliffe and Hurs in being burnt at the stake, Socrates drinking hemlock while discoursing on the immortality of the soul, or of Jesus in being crucified for the joy of living and dying for a great cause. The Christians extol this as the greatest gift to mankind, to realise a kingdom of love, given in love, and given for love, but the Hindus have a different angle of vision which is directed towards the abstract Narayana, not a Vedic god.

The standards had been changing with the progress of time. In the old days bad things were easily concealed and there was hardly any standard worth the name. It never troubled society and the respecter of morality to provide any decent law to put a stop to such a state of

things. This was impossible without one God, one religion and one law for all. The growth of society, morality and race propagation entirely depended on the great question of the sex problem and their inter-courses. The sanctity of marriage required to be respected for (i) the growth of population, (ii) the regulation of passion, (iii) the binding of society and (iv) the abstaining from any marriage at variance with the prevailing standard of culture.

The Rig Veda, the oldest of all the Vedas, whose composer was a sage clothed with the name of Narayana, sang the sacred hymn of the organic theory of creation, *i.e.*, the four social orders of mankind sprang from the body of the great Creator. Patriarchs, Prophets and Kings of Ancient India focussed their eyes upon Him as the deliverer of mankind.

A tree is known by its fruits and a man is remembered by his deeds, either as a monster or as a god. It is with the sacred waters of a running stream or a sincere prayer that religious baptism has been performed from time immemorial and, as such, rivers became sacred in the eyes of religion and men.

The whole human race sprang from one family. The Christian Bible says that God "Hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the Earth, and hath determined their habitation." When the human being was born he was more than an animal. There was something more than a physical body. The real man was reflected in his knowledge, perception, will, personality, reason and conscience. All those were summed up in what was called the nature, and was the real man. By first birth man inherits the divine nature from above and from within. The cultural birth is the real birth and it is called the second birth by the Hindus. The idea of rebirth is the essence of all cultural notions of the world. Christian Scripture bears out the books of Hindu religion :—

"Through this simple act of believing God, the Holy spirit has begotten a new life in your heart. You are as a child born into the family of God and He loves you as He loves His son."

Herein lies the greatness of man and his superiority over beasts. It is really and truly God's creation which one can feel and see and not the external world with which the first man praised the Creator, the Almighty Father. Give your face to God and He will put His shine upon it. Every Saint has been born into the family of God by a miraculous conception. As the soul responds to His manifold overtures of love and goodness in Nature and yields unquestioning obedience to His revealed will, there is established in the human heart an eternally settled assurance of the existence of God.

To eliminate God from one's life because one cannot comprehend Him and His ways, is the most tragic mistake one can commit. One does not understand all about electricity, yet one avails oneself of its light, warmth and power. God is infinite, in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and man may be ever searching and learning, but he cannot think of exhausting His resources, His wisdom, His goodness and His power. Make your religion lovely if you are really in love with it. One is happy in proportion to being kind and sympathetic and not being selfish.

The creation of heaven and earth opens the first chapter of every Book of Religion, and so it is with the Bharata Samhita, from which the two great Indian Epics grew. Those who work to make others happy are the happiest men in the world, and those who are seeking happiness for themselves are the most dissatisfied people and do all sorts of wrongs. It is in the heart that the true singing has its habitation, which is called the universal language of mankind. The new birth means a new man. Count Tolstoy said that the best music was called the speech of Heaven and Angels.

The whole range of the external and internal life of a man is divided into two parts, *viz.*, the Kriya Kanda (life of action) and Jnana Kanda (life of knowledge); closely connected with this view is the relationship between Atma and Paramatma. Activity is an essential attribute of the Atma, associated with Prakriti—the inner force of enjoyment and energy—as the consciousness from which knowledge and wisdom are sprung is the means of approaching Paramatma. Atman and Paramatman are distinct entities. Atma is enclosed in an animal frame, but Paramatma is all-pervading consciousness. It is through faith and knowledge that man realises his existence in Atman. It is through adversity that the craving of man is turned towards higher consciousness. Sorrow and sufferings, pleasure and pain do not lead to the bliss which can only be realised by the human soul in its endeavour to approach Paramatma, with whom it is seeking communion.

"Philosophy is the secret milk of adversity. And sweet are the uses of adversity, which like a toad. ugly and reckonous, wears yet a precious jewel on its head." (Shakespeare).

As a student, the young Aryan had to pass through a strenuous period of study. It was a period of activity during which he learnt by heart, like a parrot, how to chant the Vedic hymns with proper pronunciation. He was not taught their meaning at this stage. He was compared to a "Tittiri" or partridge. It was at the sacrifice where, after the completion of his instruction, he took part as a priest, that he became

acquainted with the esoteric meaning of the hymns which were chanted on these occasions. He derived not only knowledge but also faith when the boons wished for by the offerer of the sacrifice were granted, and this was further fortified by the miracles or strange events that sometimes happened at a sacrifice. The sacrifice therefore was to him, and to the whole community which participated in it, a great act in which knowledge and faith were gained in addition to the manifold material blessings which flowed from them. It was the sacrifice, with its various emblems, and their proper understanding, which further led to the metaphysical speculations about Atma and Paramatma that lie in the background of the present Mahabharata. The current Mahabharata begins with the Pausya Parva, which describes the student life in monasteries. These students were the well-known Vedic hymn composers and were successful in reaching the goal through Narayana worship. It is followed by Poulama and Astika Parvas.

In the Paushya Parva (in the Adiparva), which has been in its main outline and in some of the necessary details eliminated in the first version, but in a later version retold in the Aswamedha Parva with full detail, one gets an echo of this conflict, between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. The king of Paushya of the earlier version is king Saudasa of the later one. His name occurs in the geneological lists in the Mahabharata, the Puranas and the Ramayana. He is the King of Ajodhya, the seat of power of the Solar dynasty. He had been cursed by the Brahmins to become a Rakshasha (demon). To him the Sage Utanka came for the Kundala which belonged to his queen. This Kundala possessed the property of the touchstone of the fables. The queen had doubted as to whether the king had really sent the Brahmin to her for the magic ornament and sent him back to the king to bring a token from the king. The king complained to him that inspite of the many favours which the Kshatriyas showered on the Brahmins, the latter treated them with harshness and cruelty, and reduced them to a wretched plight. He charged Utanka to communicate this to the queen, who understood this to be a sort of token from the king expressing a desire on the part of the king that she should give her valuable ornament to the Brahmin. In this story of Utanka it is clearly brought out that the sage Utanka, who was a worshipper of Rudra (Mahadeva) and was about to pronounce a curse on Krishna, became at once converted into a worshipper of Narayana.

The above is not the only instance of the bitter strife that was going on between the Brahmins and Kshatriyas. It led to the weakening of both these castes and the consequent rise of the non-Aryans to power. The danger of the submergence of Aryan culture under non-Aryan

domination became patent to all. Hence the sacrifices were reformed and made all-embracing, and the Bharata Samhita was composed as a means to inaugurate a period of peace and intercaste harmony by recital of stories on the occasions when the sacrifices were performed. These were strung together as a compendious whole and became the foundation of the mighty structure on which the present Mahabharata was raised.

The Poulama Parva begins with a legend connected with the Fire god. It speaks of the social marriage union solemnised before the fire, which has a spiritual bearing and meaning. In this legend Bhrigu cursed the Fire god for showing some partiality to the demon Puloma, when the latter had abducted Puloma, the wife of Bhrigu, after referring the matter to the arbitration of the Fire god. In the said arbitration the Fire god, having been placed in a quandary, had declared the truth that one who had first wooed might have some sort of preference over one who subsequently married. It refers to an early loose system of marriage which obtained among the Indo-Aryans and which was sought to be reformed by the Vedic sage Swetaketu. Bhrigu, who became furious, laid a curse on the Fire god that everything he touched would be destroyed. But the fire being the medium through which all the other gods received the offerings made to them by their devotees on earth, the great gods were interested in this matter and interceded. The curse was accordingly modified to suit the requirements of the gods and of the mortals, who have to cook their food with it.

It cannot be overlooked that in the previous Parva, fire is worshipped in the form of a horse, and this is a very early belief. The connection between the two Parvas is very clear. The fire which Utanka blew from the back of the horse was a destructive fire with which he frightened the snake king Takshaka to restore him the Kundalas, which the snake king had stolen from him. The legend of Utanka contains reference to the non-sacrificial fire, but perhaps implies Vedic sacrificial rites. The fire Utanka blew from the back of the horse though non-sacrificial is shown to be productive of the same result. This fire as well as Janmejoya's sacrificial fire engendered mortal dread in Takshaka, king of the Nagas.

The dissertation on Atma and Paramatma in the guise of two women in the story is also characteristic of the Mahabharata. The Epic is distinguished from similar literary productions by the importance it attaches to spiritual questions, *e. g.* on soul and on God and the way to attain god-head. Furthermore, the legend of Utanka in its general as well as in its special features is characteristic of the very spirit of the Bharata Samhita and is considered so important that a section is

devoted to it in Asvamedha Parva, in which the story is retold, and an Anugita is attached to it.

The cruel sacrifices became abhorrent in the later period of the Vedic age. With the growth and predominance of Narayana worship, sacrifices with slaughter of animals were stopped. And it is significant that the great king Uparichara, who was an ardent worshipper of Narayana, performed even his Aswamedha sacrifice with offerings of forest products only and without the horse or any animal sacrifice whatsoever, (Santi Parva, Chapter 337). Thus the sacrifices were humanised and, as has been said before, they served a very important cultural purpose. The Yajna now began to be clearly explained to the public who gathered to witness its performance. The various rituals connected with it and their symbolical meaning were explained. Furthermore, instructions on superstitious practices and child welfare were imparted to the people through parables which were narrated to them from day to day by the priest, and these are preserved in the Markendaya Section of the Bana Parva, which is a complete book explaining all the rituals connected with Yajna.

There is no doubt that sacrifices conserved the traditions and the culture of the people, which came to be closely interwoven with offerings which were made to the various gods and goddesses through fire. The legend of the Fire god was so developed that it absorbed various current forms of popular worship, and from this point of view the sacrifices of a later age marked a stage in the transition from the earlier form of Vedic worship to the later phase of Narayana worship, which held a very strong sway over the people. The Markendaya Section, which clearly adumbrates the outlines of this change and which is not only explanatory of the many important questions raised in the Adiparva, in connection with the snake sacrifice held by Janméjoya, but confirmatory of many of the themes treated therein, is an important section of the Bharata Samhita.

The central theme of the Markendaya section is the birth of Kartikeya, the War god. He is shewn to be the son of the Fire god by Svaha. All the women who had become interested in, and compromised by the birth of this prodigy were transformed into various evil forces which cause early death to children. The offspring to the War god himself were also described as malignant influences which cause harm to the seed during pregnancy. These evil forces, which haunt men up to the 70th year of their life, had to be propitiated in the sacrifice by means of suitable offerings. The wife of Kartikeya was Deva Sena, who is worshipped in the form of Shasthi and Lakshmi by men, and she is

represented as a benign deity. The entire mythology connected with the Fire god covered schemes of child and maternal welfare based on sorcery and witchcraft of a superstitious age. The reason why one is inclined in favour of an early date for the Markendaya section, and the opinion is in substantial agreement with Professor Oldenberg, is that it interprets the useful nature of sacrifices and furnishes unmistakable evidence of the connection between the sacrifice and the liturgy of Atharva Veda, and secondly that it is linked up with the relevant portions of Adiparva bearing upon snake sacrifice.

Sarama (cf. Sans. Sarameya = Dog), the bitch mother of dogs, which cursed Janmejoya, is represented as a malignant animal which in the shape of Sarama steals away the phoetus from the uterus of women. Kadru, the mother of the snakes, enters it and eats the phoetus. Binata is represented as the vulture and Putana a fearful and terrible Rakshashi of a hideous form causing abortion. There is no doubt that these were popular superstitions current among the people, by which they tried to explain many physiological phenomena connected with childbirth and child welfare, and that in the great sacrifices provisions were made for removing and undoing these evil influences. The story telling by the priest provided teachings on these heads. Kadru, the Rakshasas and Gandharvas were invoked and these were forms of exorcism which were practised at the sacrifices. For this reason, the composition of the Markendaya section of Bana Parva must be assigned to a very early period and it should be regarded as an important portion of the Bharata-Samhita.

The fact that when the big sacrifices which were performed by powerful kings went out of vogue, religious worship connected with child welfare and practices which were of the nature of exorcism survived, show the extent, measure and strength of popular belief. Manasa, the goddess of snakes, is even now worshipped with great fervour on the day of Dasahra, and offerings are made to Shasthi, the presiding deity of the children, and she is propitiated by means of special puja and offerings on the sixth day of childbirth. The vestiges of ancient worship still linger in the worship of tree, fish, snake-deity Manasa, Durga, Sarasvati, Kartick, Siva, Krishna, etc., on particular days of the year in orthodox Hindu homes. The influence of the philosophic God Narayana had become so great that even Moslems who settled in India offered him flour and milk and the God was regarded by them as a Pir who gave success to his followers. The form of worship by offering of Sinni to him on the full moon day and the last day of the month is still very widely prevalent in India. The God is called Satya Narayana or the real Narayana of truth.

The early Aryans were not barbarian beasts to fly away from or lie stupified and dumb with fear before fire or other terrific scourges of Nature, but they prayed to be saved from them. Growth of knowledge, however, ran parallel to the cravings of the primitive mind. The real higher education of a community could only begin after their elementary needs were provided for. Man is exposed to physical and supernatural fears. He seeks protection against them by the construction of his quarters on hills, in dales or in river valleys. The natural phenomenon of a powerful person forcing his authority on the rest of the community led men to think of a Supreme God who rules over all. This God was invoked in hymns. Family life evolved out of the social need of conserving the race and perpetuating creeds and traditions. This gave rise to ancestor-worship. The authority which was exercised in a patriarchal society by the *pater familias* was the foundation of ancestor-worship. The deceased ancestors began to be worshipped and this was the first stage in the evolution of religion. Then came nature-worship, and the two together constituted the first step in the attainment of knowledge.

The close connection between religion and social needs cannot be too strongly emphasised. The mythology of the early Indo-Aryans shows that their tradition goes back to a period anterior to the discovery of the art of agriculture as a means of sustaining life. The mythology of the boar incarnation of Narayana relates to the realisation of tillage being one of the best means of raising corn from the land. The Aryan Rishis noticed that when the earth was turned by the boar with its tusk, the seed which fell on it germinated more quickly than when it fell on soil which had not been treated in the same way. This is what occurs in the hymn of Sita in the Rig Veda. The Sita of the Ramayana is reminiscent of the Sita of the Rig Veda in that she is stated in the former to have sprung from the earth when it was furrowed with the plough by king Janaka of Mithila. The story may contain a great historical truth, namely, that agriculture by means of ploughs might have been first introduced among the Videhas and then the system might have spread to Ayodhya, and this perhaps explains the wide popularity of the legend of Rama and Sita. The Kings of Mithila were renowned for their wisdom and knowledge, and it was the special feature of the court of Janaka, and this was perhaps largely due to the introduction of a rational system of husbandry which contributed not a little to an outburst of cultural activity at Mithila, the capital of the Videhas.

The Indian Epics do not belong to the Vedic, Upanishad, Sutra or Pouranic periods. It was an age in which many .complex practices and systems of belief existed. Creation was identified with Brahma, the

Universal Soul, and everything was believed to have emanated from Him. The idea of Brahma omnipresent in the immobile and mobile is found in the death of Hiranyakasipu. The love and faith of his son Prahlada brought forth the great Nrisinghadeb even from the inanimate pillar broken by the Asura, Hiranyakasipu. The great lion-man god of tremendous power and roar terrified the Asura and the world. The ancients in shaping the gods clothed them with supernatural attributes to infuse awe and terror in the minds of infidels. It was for this purpose that animal-headed supernatural beings were depicted in the cave drawings and in Pouranic mythology. The Epics demonstrate the process of evolution from great men to great supernatural beings and deities, *viz.*, Nara and Narayana, Rama, Parasurama, Sri Krishna, Balarama and Kapila. The Pandavas and similar persons were made demi-gods. The Upanishads declare there is nothing but one self-existent spirit, the mute Brahma, and all else is illusion or Maya. In the Pouranic age the theory of Karma came into prominence above all. An evil follows a man even after death and through many transmigrations.

Birth in a high caste family or a low caste family was thought to be the immediate effect of works in the previous life. The theory of evolution of action was then materialised in the idea of God. Krishna was a great reformer against this Pouranic system of fatalism, or belief in the effects of a previous life's works. The Ramayana, Book VII, gives the story of transmigration of a Brahmin worshipper of Siva in a Benares temple. He was a Kulapati, to which family Sounaka belonged as stated in the Poulama Parva of the Mahabharata. The Epics abound in instances of re-births in the higher or lower orders of animal life, according to works in previous lives, *e. g.*, the story of the mother of the bitch in the Pousya Parva cursing King Janmejoya that the object of the snake sacrifice would not be fulfilled, the story of the dog complaining to Rama and praying for the punishment of a Brahmin who had beaten it for no fault and who had been exalted to the rank of a Kulapati by mere good fortune, and the story of King Nahusa being transformed into a snake. Here idol worship and enjoyment of place, position and wealth are denounced as sure means of one's ultimate degradation and ruin.

In sacrifices Angira, Atharva, Bhrigu were invoked as representing the spirits of the dead and they were said to be propitiated when they were thought to be drinking the Soma-Rasa offered to them*. In Brihadranyaka Upanishad as well as in Rig Veda Yajnavalkya, in answer to Bidagdha, Sakalya mentioned one Biswa Deva and the Fire was addressed as the great power of the 33 deities and

* (10, 14. 46 Rik).

as representing Barun, Mitra and Indra. The Moon represents the objects of Sense and the Sun the 'Ego' or the conscious-self. All these ultimately centred in Brahma, eventually the self-differentiating Unity or Souparna as is mentioned in the Rig Veda* and the Bharata Samhita. The poets and wise men ascribed divinity to various human beings. This is how the Pouranics ascribed divinity to seven Rishis in the different cycles or Mannantaras until the idea of Avatara (incarnation of God) intervened. These Avatars are ten in number, *viz.*, (1) Matsya, (2) Kurma, (3) Baraha, (4) Nrisingha, (5) Baman, (6) Parasurama, (7) Rama, (8) Krishna, (9) Balarama and (10) Buddha. Another Avatar, *e.g.*, 'Kalki', is expected to come at the end.

The deeds of Rama and Krishna form the subjects of the Indian Epics. Buddha was a great religious conception of God who stood against sacerdotal tyranny and caste system, and preached universal love and charity as a better means of getting rid of the evils of passion and selfishness than by waging war. He enjoined that the greatest principle of religion consisted in non-destruction of animal life At the time when Buddha flourished in India, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, and Confucius appeared in other parts of the world. That was an epoch-making age. Wise and virtuous kings and religious apostles and philosophers were the real milestones in the great march of time and were truly the makers of cycles of age or Mannantaras. All sacred books and traditions yielded to them and they became the makers of men and gods, heaven and hell, virtue and vice, and good and evil.

However, it will be seen that Narayana is not one of the ten Avatars, but was the Epic conception of the ideal God-head, distinct from that of the Veda. The sages saw the great powers of the elements, the beneficient works of the sun and the moon, and conceived the true idea of one Lord presiding over all. They saw the beneficient services of the rivers providing them with drink and fishes, watering the trees and fields to give them fruits, flowers and grain. They witnessed the falling of the rivers into the limitless sea with the sky mingling with it and its thundering billows and the invigorating and bracing air on the shores. The majestic appearance and disappearance of the Sun and the Moon with the stars around created an idea of the majesty of God, the great Creator of the universe. The ancient seers and patriarchs were convinced that they were too weak and powerless before these powerful agencies of God. They saw in them the spirit of God and invoked them with prayers, offerings and libations to propitiate Him.

* (10. 114, 5.)

The phenomena of the Sun and the Moon, the one as the source of energy in the creation being justly regarded as its Prana (or vitality), and the other as superinducing and embalming sleep, the one as the source of all activity and the other embodying the principle of passivity or rest, and silently causing the rotation of lunar phases and ebb and tide, were connected by the early Indo-Aryans with the two forms of worship, the deity and ancestor worship. Kings who were worshippers of the Sun and the Moon were respectively distinguished as the lineal descendants of either. The Bharata Samhita clearly put forward the view that the Devajajna and the Pitrijajna were not conflicting but were inter-related and the popular misconception was dispelled by the story of a conflict between Rudra and Narayana, Gods respectively of destruction and preservation, ending in peace and in the establishment of the true path of piety (Dharmayana) and this has been clearly elucidated in Manu Samhita:—

"The fire offering to be made in Sraddha must not be made in any other fire than that in which Vedic and Smarta rites are performed; a Brahmana keeper of the sacred fire must not offer a Sraddha on any other day in the dark fortnight except on the day of the new Moon.

"The foremost of Brahmanas obtains the same merit by offering libations of water to the manes after his bath, as is acquired by instituting the Pitriyajnas (*i.e.*, Sraddhas, lit-sacrifices offered to the manes).

"The Rishis call the (heirarchy of) father as Vasus, the (heirarchy of) grandfathers as Rudras, and the (heirarchy of) great-grand fathers as Adityas

"Every day, eat the residue of cooked food left after first feeding the Brahmanas (Vishvasa); eat, every day, ambrosia. The first is called Vishvasa the second is the residue of food left after performing a sacrifice therewith.

"Even the eternal S'ruti has acknowledged the divinity of the manes. Thus I have told you all about the mode of performing the five daily sacrifices, and all rites in connection therewith. Now hear me describe the means by which the twice-born ones shall earn their livelihood".

The Bharata Samhita records the incident of the conflict between Rudra and Narayana. The place where it occurred has been identified with the Ashrama (hermitage) of Kapila (*Vide* Vana Parva, Chapter 114). It became invested with sanctity and became a place of pilgrimage. Yudhisthira, who visited the place, was advised to offer prayer to Varuna before immersing himself in the waters at the confluence of the Ganges and the Sagar (sea). This prayer is significant for elucidating the mutual relations among the Vedic gods discussed before. Thus it became a place of great sanctity. Formerly great merit was acquired by visiting places in which great incidents had taken place.

The region where Kapila lived and which had witnessed a struggle* between Rudra and Narayana became sacred to the Aryans, and pilgrimages were undertaken to this place. The Ashrama (hermitage)

*Shanti Parva, Narayana Section, Chapter CCCXLIII, verses 183—188.

of Kapila was visited by the heroes of the Ramayana and of the Mahabharata. The mention of this fact in the two Epics testifies to their common origin and establishes the important inter-relation existing between the two, through the cult of Narayana worship propounded by Kapila. It was here that Rama made his offerings to the manes of his ancestors (*vide* Adikanda Svarga 44, V. 14-15). It is interesting to note that this place was visited by Ravana, the great Rakshasa king, who on coming to the hermitage of Kapila in Svetadwipa, which was the stronghold of Narayana worship, met the great sage and fell aghast and senseless. Kapila did not kill Ravana, but only made him senseless. Later on Ravana came across Narada and heard from him all about Narayana, who resided in Svetadwipa. Narada told him that the merit of performing Yajna, Tapasya and Charity would be powerless to react on the region of the great God. He reflected for a while and exclaimed that he would like to fight with him, the Supreme Being, not forgetting that his life was saved in his struggle with Kartabiryarjuna and Mandhata at the intercession of his ancestor Pulashta and sage Galava. This supplies a clue to the cause of the prevalence of ancestor-worship and Rama taking back Sita at the instance of his departed forefathers after the fire ordeal.

The cult of ancestor-worship is illustrated by the legends in the Epics, and if these legends are carefully studied they will be found to be the parent stock of the Epic themes. There are legends which centre round natural phenomena. To the ancients the most important natural phenomena were the limitless ocean below and the vast sky above, connected by lightning, thunder and rain. The earliest legends connected with the former commenced with the churning of the ocean and referred to the difference between the Devas and Asuras arising over the distribution of the ambrosia recovered therefrom, and the other connected with the latter, related to the fight between Indra and the Asura Britta, who typified the cloud. The former class symbolised the conflict for knowledge and related how Veda (Book of Knowledge) was stolen by the Demons Madhu and Kaitava, how Narayana recovered it from them and how the earth grew from the flesh of the vast bodies of demons slain. This Veda or Vedic lore is called Saraswati or Vedabati in the Veda and in its interpretations in the Indian Epics. Sita of the Veda and the Ramayana is identified with Vedabati or Vedic lore in the Mahabharata in the discourse between Hanuman and Bhima :—

"Rama recovered his wife like the lost Vedic lore "*.

The Uttarakanda Ramayana says that Sita was called in the previous life Vedabati, daughter of sage Kusadvaja, the son of Brihaspati, who

*Mbh. Bana Parva. Chapter CLXVIII, verse 9.

observed religious austerities for having Narayana as her husband. She sacrificed her life when Ravana stood in her way*. The story of the stealing of Vedic lore and the recovery thereof was developed in the Ramayana in the well-known episode— the carrying away of Sita by the demon Ravana in the absence of Rama and her recovery by Rama, an incarnation of Narayana†, after killing the powerful wicked Ravana bear ample testimony. The latter class of legends symbolises the fight for subjugating and utilising the forces of Nature and relate how Indra, who was a worshipper of Pasupati, tried to conquer the Demon Britta, who was a worshipper of Narayana, by his thunder-bolt, *i.e.*, by sheer force, but failed, how Indra thereupon became converted into a worshipper of Narayana and got the advice of Narayana, the God of truth and knowledge, to conquer Britta with the help of the bone of the anti-Narayanite sage Dadhichi and how Indra in that way succeeded in killing Britta. This represented the transformation of the obstructing, disturbing and evil clouds into beneficent rain with the help of knowledge in science for the good of mankind, and this legend in the Bharata Samhita is developed full-fledged in both the Epics.

The central theme of all the legends in the Bharata Samhita was the supremacy and predominance of Narayana worship. The legend of Gajendramokshan in Adi Parva is considered to be the prologue of the Mahabharata. In this legend of the huge bird, Garuda was represented as the most powerful being, bearing as it does, Narayana, the Supreme Being or Paramatma, on its wings and fighting with Indra for the nectar and defeating him. The defeat of Indra, a Vedic god, at the hands of Garuda, the carrier of Narayana, is a fitting illustration of the Joya or triumph of Narayana worship over the Vedic forms of worship, *e.g.*, of Indra, Rudra, etc.‡. Pasupati or Siva was the god of the materialistic world, and the bull-borne Indra (Adi Parva), who was at first a follower of Pasupati, represented the king of the materialistic world. The defeat of Indra at the hands of Garuda in a manner symbolises the defeat of the materialistic Pasupati cult before the spiritualistic Narayana cult. This is what Joya in the invocation verse means.

The culminating point in the ascendency of the Narayana cult is perhaps sought to be visualised when even Sukra, the high priest of the Pasupati worshippers Asuras and Demons, took to preaching and inculcating the excellence of Narayana worship to the Demon king Britta§, and when Bhrigu, an arch-apostle of the Pasupati cult and who had tried Narayana, became converted to an ardent Narayana

* Ramayana Book VII, Canto 17.

† U Ramayana Book I, Cantos 15 and 16.

‡ Astik Parva.

§ Mbh. Shanti Parva, Chapters 279 and 280.

worshipper*. Bhrigu's feet became the emblem of Narayan worshippers.

From the foregoing legends of Narayana being the rescuer and propagator of the Vedic lore, and the Vedic lore being named Saraswati in the Vedas, Vedabati or Sita in the Ramayana, the implication and appositeness of the invocation slokas of the Epics and Puranas, invoking the grace of Narayana and Saraswati, will be abundantly clear. It may also be pertinently inferred that this invocation is also addressed indirectly to the seven great sages (Saptarshi) in whom the goddess Saraswati entered at the instance of God Narayana, *i.e.*, in whom Saraswati initiated and infused the Vedic lore† which was given out to the world in the Epics, Puranas, etc. This is the revelation by Narayana in the Indian Epics and the invocation verse at the beginning of its reading refers to it.

The great philosopher Kapila, who conceived the idea of God Narayana, ascribed the origin of the creation of the earth and its creatures to Prakriti and Purusha.

The Pouranic conception of god Narayana as lying on the head of the great snake Basuki, who is reputed to hold the earth, and Lakshmi the goddess of prosperity sitting at His feet fully controlled by Him, explains the invocation (in the invocation verse) of Narottama Nara, the first Purusha, the best of all creation, above the influence of success or prosperity in the mundane world personified in goddess Lakshmi and the churning of the ocean by means of the snake Basuki and the mountain Mandar gives clear indication of the place where it took place, namely, in the ocean lying by the side of India.

* Ramayana Uttarakanda.. Canto 61.

† Mbh. Shanti Parva. Chapter 3?6.

INDO-ARYAN EPIC GENESIS.

The present age differs materially from the past, but it wants to judge the past with the present, and men want harmony and solidity of truth based on history in the Epic. They forget that the Epic tries to awaken those latent feelings of benevolence and sympathy from which the intellectual and moral greatness of mankind grows. It wants to prove that the vale of tears is the veritable temple of God where service is to be performed to convert the most alarming evils into the greatest blessings.

There is a great truth in the saying "Innocence is bliss". Primitive men could read the hieroglyphics which they invented and disdained to seek divinity or poetry in flowers. They had faith and instinct as animals, which they lost with education and culture. They loved truth and bore no malice. There was no vendetta nor vandalism. The Indian Epic did not grow out of any vendetta. There has been vandalism so far as the Epic is concerned. The Mahabharata may really be called the true great Epic of India.

What the Bible is to the Christians the Mahabharata is to the Hindus. A general account of the historical literary condition under which the literature of the Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata sprang up and was welded together or separated from age to age must naturally be a very interesting study.

It has presented to European Sanskrit scholars of great repute a veritable Tower of Babel. They found it very hard to trace the state of progress and growth on account of its vast material and variety of subjects.

They failed to find the clue and the bearing of so many divisions of the great Epic, sometimes full of repetitions and contradictions. Though they were convinced of the many reconstructions, revisions and inclusions of outside matter, yet they want in it unified work by one poet. However, it must be said that all credit is due to J. Dahlmann for his *bonafide* attempt to prove it to be so. He was followed by the great Professor Sylvain Levi, who explains the Mahabharata as "a deliberate composition organically and artistically spread around a central fact and inspired by a dominant sentiment which penetrates and permeates it." He found it to be a code of Kshatriya discipline as practised by the Bhagavatas with all its exaggerations and episodes, with all its varied and luxuriant mass of detail.

The task of tracing the origin of the Epics is beset with difficulties. History in the strict modern sense of the word is not known to have existed in the Vedic or post-Vedic period. The first glimmering of anything like historical accounts appears in the Indian Epics themselves, and though it is difficult to separate the chaff from the grain, yet some connected accounts may be culled from the Epics. It is for this that the accounts of events of the Epic and post-Epic periods may be hazarded with some degree of certainty, but those of the pre-Epic periods, resting as they do purely on inferences based on circumstantial evidence, cannot be asserted authoritatively.

The Indian Epics are more records of Indian religious developments than of chronological events. From the available mass of evidence—Vedic, Upanishadic, Pouranic, etc.—it seems reasonable to infer that religion or worship in the Vedic and pre-Epic periods was only ritualistic and consisted only in the performance of religious rites, austerities, ablutions, offerings and sacrifices. Love of God, attachment to the Almighty Father, or delight in singing His praises formed no part of their religious creed. The Bharat Savitri, which Vyasa preached to his son, Sukdeva, contains reference only to the observance of religious rites, pursuit of success and attainment of desires, as the *summum bonum* of their creed *. This Bharat Savitri has been repeated and explained in the great Epic, times out of number, at the time of bereavements of kings and Rishis, and this formed the key-note of the Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata. Narada gave good advice to his father-in-law, the king Srinjoya, when he lost his son, and so on. It soon became evident that the worshippers of Vedic deities came to the conclusion that there was no predicate in the human language worthy of God and the Upanishad spoke of Him with words of 'No' 'No', *i.e.*, they rejected one after another, all that was chosen to represent God. The Epic must find an echo of it in its lessons by examples. This was not the only stage of peculiar human progress of the mind in India.

The pro-ritualistic proclivities of the age brought forth a compendium of liturgical rules and rules of conduct for the kings, priests and the people in the Bharata Samhita. The maxims and rules instead of being presented as dry aphorisms and harsh injunctions, were set off against the pleasing background of parables and legends of kings, priests and the people, with the result that the rules and maxims easily appealed to the imagination of the people and, by trying to imitate and emulate the examples set out in the Samhita, they instinctively followed the rules and maxims inculcated therein. Thus the Bharata Samhita

* The Mbh. Swargarohan Parva, Chapter V.

maybe said to have originated in the school of the Vedic sacrifices, and the four Ashrams (stages) of domestic and religious life. During the Naga sacrifice of king Janmejoya, when the great Rishi Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa came there, he was exhorted by the king to relate the story of the Kurus and Pandavas. Vyasa asked one of his disciples, Vaisampayana, to relate it, and evidently the latter related the story in brief as it was in the Bharata Samhita*. On hearing the said short story, certain doubts arose in king Janmejoya's mind and he formulated certain important questions and requested answers thereto.† Evidently the Epic Mahabharata was written by Vyasa in compliance with this request of king Janmejoya. He wrote it in about a lakh of Slokas and it took him three years to complete it. The questions of king Janmejoya and Vaisampyana's reply were as follows:—

"The history of the deeds of Kurus, called the Mahabharata, you recited in brief did not satisfy me. O best of Brahmana. It could not be a trifling cause for which the virtuous Pandavas killed those whom they should not have killed and for which they are still praised by men. Why did those best of men, (the Pandavas), capable of avenging themselves on their enemies, though innocent, quietly suffer the persecutions of the wicked Kurus? O best of Brahmanas, why did the mighty armed Bhima, having the strength of ten thousand elephants, though persecuted, patiently keep his anger down? Why did not the chaste Krishna, the daughter of Drupada, though persecuted by the wicked (Kurus), burn the sons of Dhritarastra by her angry eyes,—capable as she was to do it? Why did the two sons of Pritha, (Bhima and Arjuna) and the two sons of Madri (Nakula and Sahadeva), those best of men though persecuted the wretches, follow Yudhisthira, who was addicted to the evil habit of gambling? Why did Yudhisthira, the best of all virtuous men and the son of Dharma himself, though acquainted with all duties, suffer great afflictions? Why did the son of Pandu, Arjuna, Krishna himself being his charioteer and who could by his arrows send to the other world hosts of fighting men, suffer so many persecutions? O great Rishi, tell me all this as they happened. (Tell me) everything that those highly mighty car-warriors did. Vaishampayana said :—O great king, appoint a time (to hear it). This history is very extensive. This is but the beginning. I shall recite the whole of this history, composed by the illustrious Krishna Dwaipayana, the great Rishi, Vyasa of immeasurable mental power, who is adored by all the world." * * * "The Rishi Krishna Dwaipayna, regularly rising (every morning) for three years, composed this wonderful history, called Mahabharata. O best of the Bharata race, whatever about Dharma, Artha and Kama, that is contained in this Bharata, may be met with elsewhere; but whatever is not in it, is not to be found anywhere *"‡

It was not said then and there, as it took the author three years to complete the book in answer to the questions put. There is mention of Vyasa's Ashrama in the Himalayas where he used to teach the pupils referred to in the table of contents of the Mahabharata, but no mention is made of Badrikasrama.

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* Mbh. Adi Parva, Chapters 60 and 61.

† Mbh. Adi Parva, Chapter, 62.

‡ The Mbh. Adi Parva, Chapter LXII, page 83. Verses 52-53.

"Living on the side of that foremost of mountains, Mahadeva of great vows scorched the gods greatly. At the foot of these mountains, in a retired spot, Parashara's son of great ascetic merit, *viz.*, Vyasa, taught the Vedas to his disciples. Those disciples were the highly blessed Sumanta, Vaishampayana, Jaimini of great wisdom, and Paila of great ascetic merit. Shuka went to that charming asylum where his father, the great ascetic Vyasa, was living surrounded by his disciples.*"

Thereafter, during king Janmejoya's Raj Suya sacrifice this Mahabharata was recited.

From the short Bharata Samhita† to the full-fledged Epic Mahabharata was not a matter of a few years. Several decades or centuries might have intervened between their respective compositions. Religion or worship of God, as foreshadowed in the Epics, still consisted in the performance of rites and ceremonies and prayers to God for granting of boons, fulfilment of desires and attainment of success. Love or attachment for God is faintly foreshadowed in the love of Draupadi, but still it is very imperfectly traceable in the Epics. To depict the God-head and to make Him attractive and loveable, the conception must be all comprehensive, and the more the conception approximates our own human feelings and sentiments, the more it appeals to our sentiment and love. Vyasa saw that in depicting God and inculcating the forms of his worship, there was this defect, that he had left out the factor of love and had not made Him loveable. He was therefore not satisfied with his production, *i.e.*, the Mahabharata.

In the Mahabharata, which he had composed for degraded Brahmins, Sudras and females, who could not understand and read the Vedas, he had depicted the God Narayana attainable through knowledge, which was not suitable for them. He was therefore not content with the Mahabharta and sought the advice of the celestial Rishi Narada, when he appeared before him. Narada told him that simple performance of religious rites and ceremonies, without singing of God's praise, could not bring real contentment. He advised him, by recounting his own previous life's experiences, that singing of God's glory would create attachment and love for God, which alone would bring him peace of mind and fulfil his desire, and he exhorted him to write a book singing God's glory and praise. This led to Vyasa composing the Bhagabata. The Mahabharata did not sing the praise of Krishna, nor did it glorify him as a god. The Bhagabata Gita did, and first supplied the elements of love or Prem in worshipping God. And the Harivamsa too, was composed to supply the omission in the Epic about Krishna's divinity. From this it will be clear that the Bhagabata was not an integral part of the Mahabharata, but was an entirely different and subsequent pro-

* Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXXVIII page 520. verses 24 27.

† See Appendix "B."

duction in which Vyasa's authorship of the Mahabharata and the Bhagabata is unambiguously acknowledged.

Apantaratama was another name of Vyasa and he was said to have sprung from the God Narayana. Vyasa inculcated the worship of Swagun Brahma (*i.e.*, God endowed with active attributes) in the Mahabharata and the Bhagabata. This is why God Narayana is represented as having killed the demons Madu and Kaitab in Hayagriba form (Horse-faced), *i.e.*, in a Swagun form, as he could not have done it in His Nirguna form, which is unaffected by feelings This perhaps preceded the age when Avatars or incarnations appeared. If Hayagriba had been an Avatar, like the Nrishingha (man-lion) form of God, it would have found a place in the category of the different Avatars. It appears that Brahma performed a sacrifice for the destruction of Madhu and Kaitaba, and in the ceremony a horse was sacrificed. This, in course of time, gave rise to Aswamedha sacrifice (horse sacrifice) in which Narayana was worshipped.

The sacred writings described the horse as being "bathed and decorated with rich trappings, the variously coloured goat being before him." The goat is killed first that it may make known to the gods that the horse is coming to them. Three times the horse is led around the sacrificial fire. He is then bound to a post and immolated with an axe. His flesh is roasted on a spit, boiled and made into balls and eaten by all who have assisted at the sacrifice.

There is a most graphic and detailed account of the ceremony in two hymns of the Rig Samhita (I,162 and 163). These describe the slaughtering and burning of the horse with a naked realism that is almost horrible. Yet they also address the soul of the horse in mystic strains, recognising it as identified with the gods through the sacrifice, as even on earth it had been their symbol.

The horse was considered one of the most valuable articles of wealth among the Indo-Aryans. The well-known mythology of the early Aryans that the horse was churned out of the ocean by the Dayas and Asuras, only testifies to the estimation in which the animal was held by them. The story is related in the Mahabharata of the sage Calava paying as honorarium to his master Visvamitra 600 horses, which the latter demanded from his pupil on the completion of the latter's studies. The quarrel between the sage Bamadeva and the king Sala, son of Parikshit, which is narrated in the Mahabharata (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 114), was occasioned by Sala's refusing to make over the two horses which he had taken from the sage. The king Sala and his brother Dala, who succeeded him to the throne, were both killed by

Bamadeva, because neither of them would hand over to him the two horses which were his property. The great sage Chyavana would only accept a cow from the great Nahusa in preference to all other gifts which the king was prepared to bestow on him.

These stories illustrate the importance in which horses and cows were held by the Aryans in ancient India. They represented the most valuable articles of wealth to kings and sages alike. It is probable that the importance of the horse preceded in point of time that of the cow, and points to a period of civilisation when people lived by hunting. This epoch was succeeded by the age when agriculture and dairy farming became the chief means of livelihood of the people.

The following extracts from the Samkhyana Sutras (xvi-I) throws some light on the literature which the Brahmins possessed in addition to what we are accustomed to call the Vedas. Incidentally, it also supplies one with the key to unlock the treasure house of the Mahabharata, and leads one straight into its earliest stratum, the original theme which was developed into its present mighty structure.

"At the Horse Sacrifice, the Adharyu calls upon singers who sing to the lute (Vinaganaginas), and invites them to celebrate the king who then performs the sacrifice, together with other virtuous kings of old On the first day of the sacrifice the priest tells the story, which begins with Manu Vaivasvata. As the people of Manu were men and there are men present at the sacrifice, the priest teaches there the householders by telling this story. He then says 'the rich verses are the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites a hymn.

"On the second day he tells the story which begins with Yama Vaivasvata from the Satapatha), as the people of Yama were the fathers and there were fathers present he teaches the elders by this story. He then says 'the Yajurveda is the Veda; this is the Veda' and recites an Anuvaka 'Asvamedhika' of the Yajush.

"On the third day he tells the story which begins with Varuna Aditya. As the people of Varuna were the Gandharvas, and as they are present, he teaches the young and fair youths by this story. He then says, 'The Atharva-veda is the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites the Vaishaja, a work on medicine.

"On the fourth day, he tells the story which begin with the Soma Vaishnava (from the Satapatha). As the people of Soma were the Apsaras, and as these were present, he teaches the young and fair maids by this story. He then says, 'The Angirasa Veda is the Veda; this is the Veda', and recites the Ghora, another work of the Atharvanikas.

"On the fifth day he tells the story which begins with Arbuda Kadraveya. As the people of Arbuda were the Sarpas or the snake charmers he teaches the Sarpas or the snake charmers by this story. He then says, 'The Sarpavidya is the Veda; this is the Veda' and recites the Sarpavidya

"On the sixth day he tells the story which begins with Kuvera Vaisravana. As the people of Kuvera were Rakshas, and as these were present, he teaches Selagas, or evil doers, by this story. He then says 'The Rakshovidya is the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites the Rakshovidya.

'On the seventh day he tells tho story which begins with Asita Dhanvana. As his men were the Asuras, and as these were present, he teaches the usurers (Kusidin) by this story. He then says, 'The Asuravidya is the Veda, this is the Veda' and performs a trick by sleight of hand.

"On the eight day he tells the story which begins with Matsya Sammada. As his men were the creatures of the water, and as these were present, he teaches the Matsyas (fishes), or the fishermen, by this story. He then says. 'The Itihasa-Veda is the Veda, this is the Veda', and recites an Itihasa.

"On the ninth day he tells the story which begins with Tarkshya Vai-pasyata. As his men were the birds, and as these were present he teaches the birds, or the young students (Brahmacharin), by this story. He then says, 'The Purana-veda is the Veda, this is the Veda', and recites the Purana.

"On the tenth day he tells the story which begins with Dharma Indra (from the Satapatha). As his men were the gods, and as these were present, he teaches the young, learned, and poor priests by this story. He then says, 'The Samaveda is the Veda, this is the Veda', and sings the Sama.

"It is full of the flames of sacrifice; in fact it contains innumerable allusions to the performance of sacrifice and is familiar with all the ceremonials connected with it."

In the days of the Rig Veda, God was apprehensible but not comprehensible; when it became so, by the progress of culture and education, then the performers' taste, devotion and inclination made it imperative to divide the distinct functions of the Vedic religion and to amplify it where necessary. Sanatkumar and Narada were the authors of the Narayana section spoken of before, and Apantaratama came out of darkness not as any maker of Vedic hymns, but became distinguished as the arranger of the hymns and rituals, and received the ephithet of Veda-Vyasa. He occupied a position analogus to that of Bhisma to the Kuru family, as a grand-father, at a later age.

The intense love expressed in the music of Vedic languages is found in Sama Veda, the intricacy of Vedic formula, worship of sacrifices, are compiled in due order in Yajur Veda, and the mystic magical powers were comprised in the Atharva Veda. This was the arrangement made in Vedic literature for the convenience of the general public—sacrifices instead of personal sacrifice for individual selfish ambition and success. But when that failed to create the desired effect on the public mind and devotional spirit, then Bharata Samhita was compiled and recited at the sacrifices to illumine the general public. It was not until the ten Upanishads received the appellation of Maha or Mahat that the idea of enlarging the Bharata Samhita was conceived. The scope of this word was far more comprehensive in the days of Panini, when it was considered to mean eternal. The name 'Mahabharata' has a clear connection with Mahatatva of Samkhya Philosophy, as well as with the greatness of

*The Mbh. Udyoga Parva, Chapter 141, verses 29—57.

the glorious kings and sages in their sacrifices for the general public. What history the Epic represents has survived because, at that time poetry alone pleased the people, just as it is now composed mainly for that purpose. It is not exactly a case of the survival of the text in Epic poetry, but of what pleased and suited the taste of the many for its survival.

Professor Max Muller's words will convey my meaning :—

'Memory and oral tradition are indeed wonderful keepers of popular poetry, and when once certain productions of that popular poetry have been recognised and invested with a sacred authority, I do not hesitate to say that poems are safer in the memory than in manuscripts. But there are certain influences in the first gathering and in the later adaptation of popular poetry to changing popular tastes, which justify us in saying that in one sense the poetry of the people is not the work of one poet, but the result of the combined lab ur of many popular poets and many popular critics.

"Facts, however, are stronger than arguments. I have seen Hindus who knew the Veda by heart, and who could detect by ear any misprint, any false accent, in my edition of the Rigveda. As to the possibility of composing long poems without writing them, I shall not argue like a lawyer and point out that Homer, if he was blind, could not possibly have written the Iliad and the Odyssey, but could only have dictated them, always supposing that writing had been known at his time. But what concerns us is, that among the peasants of Finland, among people ignorant of reading and writing, large fragments of epic poetry have been discovered during the first half of our century, entirely preserved by oral tradition, never written before, either by the poet or by his admirers, and yet easily fitted together into one Epic poem. I wish I had time to explain to you the process by which these poems had been preserved, and at last have been collected, printed, critically edited, and translated But I think you will have seen, even from these short remarks, in what sense popular poetry, such as the Homeric poems, for instance, may be said to reflect not only the thoughts of one poetic mind, but at the same time the thoughts of many people who would not have listened to, that is to say, who would not have allowed any poetry to survive, except what they themselves approved of*."

The exact date has not yet been ascertained conclusively, but it seems to be certain that the period in which the Indian Epics grew out of the Bharata Samhita and attained that degree of perfection to which Vyasa and Valmiki brought them, must be before the Grecian Epic of Homer, 1,000 B.C. The art of writing in India was known long before it was in any other part of the world. The Greeks learnt the practice of multiplying copies of books by transcription for public sale and introduced it in their country in 500 B C. Athens had a special market-place for selling books, and it developed into a regular book fair in the process of time. The old lays of the Deva and Asura fight, handed down by oral traditions, were fixed by means of writing in the Bharata Samhita. This is the Britta Gita recited in the Mahabharata.

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*Professor Max Muller's "Collected Works," pages 311—313.

The Bharata Samhita is directly connected with the Rigveda; whatever links it up with the hymns and metaphysics of the Rigveda, should be esteemed to be the earliest portions of the Mahabharata, *i.e.*, they constitute the integral parts of the Bharata Samhita.

One finds distinct mention in the combined Rik Verse X. 167. 4, by Visvamitra and Jamadagni, that the river Sindhu was made fordable by them and they demonstrate that from Central India people went to the Punjab and Vasistha lived in the Punjab, where the king Sambarana took refuge when he was defeated by the Panchala king mentioned in the Mahabharata. The chant of Pirthu, son of Vena, shows how he got supremacy over animals (*vide* Panchavimsa Brahmana, pages 325/6). It is evident that in the Vedic age wife, children and domestic animals used to give great support to householders. Kings sought the co-operation of the chiefs of the people as much as the help of the cattle and domestic animals to rule the country; marriages became a necessity not only for race propagation, but also for the secondary necessity of receiving this support.

Brihaspati's chaplainship of the gods and the merit of giving fees in cows and horses are mentioned as follows:—

"A nine versed agnistoma. (1)."

"As its morning-service when the Narasamsa-cups have been deposited, he assigns eleven (cows) as sacrificial fee; at the midday-service (when the Narasamsa-cups have been deposited) he assigns (eleven) (cows) with a horse as twelfth. Both these groups (of eleven and twelve) he separates (from all the daksina-cows that stand together to the south of the sacrificial ground and he gives them to the officiating priests); at the afternoon-service (he assigns) eleven (cows, when the Narasamsa cups have been deposited), and he gives them at the barren cow (*i.e.*, when this cow, destined for Mitra and Varuna, has been immolated). The so-called Narasamsa-cups are deposited five times during the whole rite, see C.H. 147 e. 153 (Morning service): 189. b. 197 (Midday-service); 230 b. (afternoon-service). In our text, the first of each (147. e and 189b) and the last (230 b) are meant. The last eleven cows are given after the rite described in C.H. 256. Usually the daksinas are given at the midday service (C.H. 191). The Jaim. br. ('Auswahl' No. 139) commends other methods of dividing the daksinas) (2)." "These make thirty-three daksina (cows); there are thirty-three deities, he reaches the deities. The horse is the thirty-fourth of the dakisnas; Prajapati is the thirty-fourth of the deities (Cp. X. I. 16); he reaches Prajapati. (3)" "This is the consecration (A sava is an ekaha with which a consecration, an anointing, obhiseka, is connected) of Brihaspati. Brihaspati desired to obtain the chaplainship (the office of Purohita) of the Gods. He performed this (sacrifice) and obtained the chaplainship of the Gods. (4)". "He who knows this obtains a chaplainship. (5)." "It is the consecration as chief judge (the Sthapati was probably a Vaisya. Some texts (T. Br. and Kath) describe a sava, which is designated by Baudh (XVIII. 3) and Ap. (XXII. 25, 2-5) as vaisyasava or sthapatisava. Laty. VIII 7.10; 'Whom they put at their head, amongst these he should henceforth lead a friendly disposed life (?; differently the commentary, but cp. Laty. VIII, 12. 1. Ksatravrttim vartayet) and they should call him Sthapati' 'Nidana sutra: purodhakamayajna uttarah sthapatisavo va, samanah sraisthye samvrniran). He whom they consecrate for the office

of a chief judge should perform this (sacrifice). (6)." "He who knows this gets an office as chief judge. (7)." "He is sprinkled (*i e.*, inaugurated) (whilst sitting) on a black antelope-hide. This (hide) is visibly the priestly lustre (according to TS. VI. 1. 3. 1., the black antelope-hide is identical, by its white spots, with the Rigveda; by its black spots, with the Samaveda; according to T Br II. 7-3-3, it is the form of the Brahman; of rc and saman.); he is inaugurated on priestly lustre (8)"*

This explains why the great priests' births were ascribed to Mitra and Varuna rather than their actual births. Spiritual life was then taken to be the real birth. But the power of the priests and the celebration of sacrifices received a rude shock from the great Kapila in his new philosophy.

The hermitage of Ayoddhaummya, with which the Mahabharata begins, is one of the earliest types of religious institutions where the three Vedas were taught, and plays an important part in the development of Indian thought and religion. The pupils of Ayoddhaummya were Vedic sages. Both Gautama and Uddalaka-Aruni were interested in the new philosophy of the Kshatriyas. The former was the founder of a new system of education, since he realised that the hardships through which students passed in the school of Ayoddhaummya were unnecessary for the purpose of higher education, and he may be said to have developed a new system of education of which the university of Saunaka became the best exponent. He abolished the course of physical hardship as unnecessary for intellectual and moral education.

Now it is quite evident that a new school of thought had come into existence in the later Vedic period. The sacrifices with which the Vedic hymns were connected had become too expensive for the kings. In fact, there is ample evidence in the Mahabharata that they financially ruined not a few of the rulers who performed them. The Brahmin priests charged ruinous fees at these sacrifices, and considered these as the only means for repairing their fallen fortunes. Complication of rituals, necessitating repetition of the formulas without the slightest deviation from those laid down, grew apace with the desire to extort as much money from the kings as the priests could. The only reward that was held out to the kings was that of heaven; but this sordid, other-world worldliness on which the priests banked, was carried too far, and it resulted in a widespread revolt on the part of the Kshatriya princes.

But the Brahmins had alliances with the important non-Aryan communities and also with the subjects of the king who liked the performance of these sacrifices, not only because festivals were always popular, but also because many of those who came to attend these sacrifices were fed free of cost at the expense of the kings. The kings therefore could

* Pancavimsa Brahmana, pages 465-66, Chap. XVII 11.

not openly protest, but were driven to the necessity of also thinking deeply on spiritual matters and evolving a metaphysical system by which they could meet the Brahmins on their own ground. The Brahmins had developed almost a complete and an almost ununderstandable liturgy. The Kshatriyas brought out a philosophical system as difficult for the ordinary people to understand.

Now the Brahmins were completely out-witted. The Brahmin sages, of whom the most important were Goutama, *alias* Veda, and Uddalaka Aruni, both disciples of Ayoddhaummya, threw off their pretensions of intellectual superiority and approached the Kshatriya princes for learning their esotoric doctrines on Atman and Paramatman. Now it is quite open to any person to object to this explanation of the inner significance of the Upanishad on the ground that the philosophical doctrines embodied therein are of such a sublime nature that they cannot be explained by material reasons. But those who have followed the processes of historical evolution will admit that the deepest and profoundest thought of the human mind is the reflection either of a material change or a material want.

Dr. Winternitz, as also many other scholars, has pointed out the Kshatriya origin of the speculations contained in the Upanishads.

"In the Upanishads, however, we are repeatedly told that kings or warriors are in possession of the highest knowledge, and that Brahmans go to them for instruction. Thus the Brahman Gautama, father of Svetaketu, goes to king Pravahana in order to be instructed by him concerning the Beyond. And it is related that the desire of Gautama was very awkward for the king: for the doctrine which he had to proclaim, had never before penetrated to the Brahmans, 'and therefore it is that in all the worlds the mastery has fallen to the share of the warrior-class.' Finally, however, the king does impart the doctrine to him,—and it is the doctrine of transmigration, which here, where for the first time it appears clearly and distinctly, proves to be a doctrine which emanated from the warrior-class, and was originally foreign to Brahmanical theology*. Another passage proves that the chief doctrine of the Upanishads, too, the doctrine of the Atman, the all one, originated in non-brahmanical circles. Here five highly learned Brahmans betake themselves to the wise Uddalaka Aruni, in order to learn from him the doctrine of the Atman. He, however, thought to himself: 'These great and learned scholars will question me, and I shall not be able to reply to everything. Well; I will direct them to someone else.' And he directed them to king Asvapati Kaikeya, to whom they actually went for instructions.†"

The university life of Naimisharanya, which is described in the Adikanda of the Mahabharata, in .the questions and answers, shows a much more developed culture than the earlier system in which the great

* Chandogya—Upanishad, V-3, Brhadaranyaka-Up., VI. 2. In the Kausitaki-Up, I the Ksatriya Citra instructs the "first of the priests," Aruni, about the Beyond.

† Dr. Winternitz's "History of Indian Literature" pp. 230-31. Chandogya-Up., V.II ff. A version of this narrative is already to be found in Sat., X. 6.1.

Vedic sages could only take two or three disciples. This stage is described very vividly in the Pausya Parva. The sages and their disciples mentioned in this connection are all composers of Vedic hymns. The university of Naimisharanya, in which Saunaka is described as the Chancellor (Kulapati) of education, centres round the performance of a twelve years sacrifice. He is also the examiner who sets questions to Souti, and the answers which the latter gives are not for the information of Saunaka, but are given with a view to show the progress Souti, son of Romaharshana, has achieved in the Vedic lore and practice in which he has received instruction. Where the answers are wrong, Saunaka merely corrects him with a smile*.

The names of the disciples of Ayoddhaummya are mentioned as composers of Vedic hymns and were necessarily separated from the age of Janmejoya II by a long interval of time. In the period of the Mahabharata the university life was much more developed than in the times of Nahusa, Yayati and Janmejoya, the grandson of Yayati. Ayoddhaummya has been wrongly assumed to be a near relative of Dhaummya, the priest of Yudhisthira, but this is transposing the two names in an inverted order. For Dhaummya's father was Astika and his brother was Debala of Jaigisabya, whose disciple he became to reach the goal. Ayoddhaummya, being the preceptor of three pupils who later on became three great sages—two of them are distinguished in Vedic literature as composers of hymns—must be assigned to the early period of Janmejoya I, the grandson of Yayati.

The Bharata Samhita, however, has connection with the less developed form. The Ashrama of Ayoddhaummya is the prototype of later universities. The great sage Veda, who was no other than Gautama†, was one of the three disciples of Ayoddhaummya. Now Gautama was a contemporary of Saudasa and Janmejoya. This Janmejoya could not be Janmejoya II the son of Parikshit, the son of Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna. There were several Parikshits and Janmejoyas confused in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata line of kings. The Janmejoya mentioned as a contemporary of Gautama, whose disciple he was, could only be the grandson of Yayati.

In the Pausya Parva, Gautama is mentioned as Veda. The great resemblance of Veda with Gautama in the Utamka Anugita, in Asvamedha Parva, and in the incidents of their lives gives reasonable ground to conclude that they were identical. But Gautama was not Deerghatama Gautama, father of Kakshivat, for this Gautama married Ahalya, twin sister of Divo Dasa, king of Benares, a composer of Vedic

* See Adikanda, Mahabharata. †See Asvamedha Parva Utamka Anugita.

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hymns and the father of Indian medical science. The daughter of Gautama and Ahalya was married to Utamka.

There can be no doubt that the current Mahabharata commences with the story of the snake sacrifice of Janmejoya. Utamka came to the king to incite him against the snakes and their king, Takshaka, who stole the Kundala given to him by the king Saudasa or Pausya, the Ikshvaku king of Ayodha. It was at the instance of Utamka that Janmejoya undertook the sacrifice. The legend of Utamka is the main theme of Pausya Parva. Is it not a little curious that in it occurs the mention of fire in its early form of horse, and the mention of Atma and Paramatma in the forms of two women? The subject matter contained in this section of the Adikanda is further elaborated in the Bana Parva etc. Many things connected with this legend, which are treated in an unintelligible manner in Pausya Parva, reappear in a clearer form in the later version.

The important question of anachronism could not be overlooked. Utamka, who was a contemporary of Basudeb and the Pandavas, could not be so with Janmejoya II. In the Anugita of Asvamedha Parva, Utamka did not get immortality or any such boon, making his existence at the time of Janmejoya II possible. It is apparent from this how part of the Bharata Samhita has been foisted upon the Mahabharata with the story of the snakes. There is hardly any date to fix the time of the conflict between the Kurus and the Nagas, which loomed large in the political background of ancient India through the different phases of its cultural development. There were two Parikshits and Janmejoyas in the Kuru line of kings. Nor is this all. Utamka became famous for slaying Dhundhu, son of Madhukaitava, through the king Kubalasva, son of Brihadasava. Utamka belongs to an earlier period beyond the shadow of a doubt. The annotator Nilkantha cited him and Parasara as performers of snake sacrifice, etc.*

But the importance of the Bharata Samhita as a historical manual of a very early age should be sufficiently stressed. The kings whose deeds are celebrated in it do not belong to a particular dynasty as in the Ramayana. The Bharata and the Mahabharata describe the achievements of the more important kings, who had ruled from Vedic times over different parts of India. The Puranas, which derived their stories and themes from the Epics, were much later works and, as it is alleged, were composed at Naimisharanya, which became famous. The Mahabharata as recited by Souti to Saunaka, who was the Chancellor of the University of Naimisharanya, was a much later

* Santi Parva 73 Chapter 33 verses, footnote.

version of the great Epic and this is conclusively proved by a palpable anachronism which occurs in it. The Bharata genealogy mentions Janmejoya I as being one of the early kings of the Lunar dynasty. Santanu found the boy on the river-side practising archery and took him to his palace. This and the story of his birth, connected with two incidents and Ganges falling in love with the father of Santanu, make the whole affair look suspicious and contradictory.

Bhisma is called one of the eight Basus who came to earth by the curse of Vasistha, to whom they did not make obeisance and they prayed to Ganges and were blessed with salvation from the curse by her good offices. The discourse between Yudhisthira and Bhisma, a substance of a dialogue between Indryota Saunaka and Janmejoya, is set forth in great detail in Santi Parva. This same king is mentioned as one of those celebrated kings of ancient India who is said to have laid down his life for the sake of Brahmins. This Janmejoya was the grandson of Yayati, and son of Puru, and cannot be the Parikshit under which name the dialogue was wrongly entered in the Mahabharata for the simple reason that Bhisma died long before Janmejoya II, the son of Parikshit II, in the line of Arjuna, was born. Besides, Janmejoya the Kuru king is mentioned in the Satapatha Brahmana as a king and Brahmanical teacher of the age. Janmejoya, the Kurus and the Panchalas are mentioned in the Ramayana and the town of Hastinapura (ii, 68,13).

Religious worship and family pride were the distinguishing feature of ancient India before the caste system came into vogue and descended to be one of the weakest of all human frailties. Every endeavour was made to secure a place in the book of religion or of philosophy, so that one's name could go down to posterity and one's glory be recited by the rhapsodists or the pouranics in the public assembly. The lists of Solar and Lunar kings in both the Epics contain the names of Nahusa and Yayati, in the latter list they occur as the ninth and tenth names; in the contemporaneous list of Solar kings, they are mentioned as the 35th and 36th in descent from the original progenitor. Jahnu, the Kuru king of North Panchala, is a contemporary of Bhagiratha, the Solar king. The name of Saudasa occurs as the 26th king of the same line. Now the list of Solar kings is somewhat confusing, for in the lists of Mithila and Ayodhya kings which were recited at the time of Rama's marriage, Janaka is placed as the 26th in descent from Nimi, whereas Dasaratha is 39th from Marichi, who was a contemporary of Nimi. For, the name of Naimisharanya owes its origin to Nimi's sacrifice.

Twelve or thirteen names of kings must be eliminated from the list of Ayodhya kings, in order to make Dasaratha and Janaka con-

temporaries, which they certainly were. These names must have been tacked on to the Ayodhya list from those of a collateral line. If this correction is made, Saudasa and Janmejoya could be shewn to have been contemporaries and this is also the opinion of Mr. Pargiter, who maintains that the list of the Ramayana is incorrect by ten or eleven kings. This is what he says;

"Putting aside Dilipa, because the comparison from him is uncertain, since the Ramayana names only one Dilipa, while the Puranas mention two, and starting from Raghu about whom there is no doubt, he (Kalidasa) gives four kings, Raghu, Aja, Dasaratha and Rama as in the Puranas, instead of the Ramayana version of 14 or 15 kings.*"

The author of the chronology of India finds that "the Aikshaku king Dasaratha, the father of Rama, the nrther Pancala king Atithigva Divodasa, the brother of Ahalya, Senajit, the southern Pancala king, Sarvabhauma and Rksa II, the sons of Viduratha of the Hastinapura line, Krta, the father of Uparicara whose descendant Brhadratha I, founded the kingdom of Magadha, Romapada, Dasaratha of the dynasty of Anga, Siradhwaja Janaka, the father of Sita, king Salvant of the Yadu dynasty, and the father of Vitahabya the Haihaya, all these ten kings belonged to the same age, namely the age of the Divodasa.

"The confusion in the lists of kings in the two Indian Epics is clear, and what is more, there is reversal in the order in the Puranas. The genealogy and chronology of the ancient kings may be of absorbing interest to students of history, but there is ample ground to believe that it is almost a hopeless task, due to one man having so many names, mis-reading and introduction of spurious names †"

The Rig Veda mentions that Garga, the son of Vajineya Bharadvaja, killed Varci and Sambara in the country of Udabraja, and Prastoka, the son of Srujaya, gave him presents as well as Divodasa (Rig II, 49, 22, 23, 25). The commentator, Sayana, says that Prostoka and Srujaya were the same as Atithigva Divodasa and Asvatha ‡. The Vedic, Epic, and Puranic evidences seldom coincide and show anachronisms.

In the time of Asvalayana Grihya Sutra, the Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata were known as two distinct works. How the one came to be tacked on to the other is in itself a very important fact.

In the Asvalayana Srauta Sutra (II. 6. 10) one finds that Bhargava, Vaithabya and Savetasa were the famous Pravaras of a section of the Bhrigus, *viz.*, of the Yakshas, Badhanlas, Maunas, Mankas, etc. In the Pravara patronymic forms were used. The Gotra and Pravara are important signs, not of lineage but to trace the priests and the form of worship the line of kings followed or changed. In the Vedic age anybody born in a family or Gotra could enter a different one if he liked, as Grtsamada Angirasa entered the Bhargava order. The Gotra was established by Arstisena, the son of Sala, in the Krta age. Arstisena

* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 121.

† Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 47.

‡ Ibid page 21.

was a Gotra title like Kausika, Vasistha, Saunaka, Rathilara and Bhargava, and the Mahabharata mentions only four gotras. It will be seen that in the Paurava genealogy none of Devapi's ancestors had the name Rstisena, whose instance would have justified the name Arstisena for Devapi, for variant forms of the names of persons are always common in the Puranas.

The authors of Rig Vedic hymns and the circumstances under which these hymns were composed are no less important to decipher the age and time of the man named in the genealogy. The Rig Veda contains the compositions of Santanu. The Mahabharata has two lists of Paurava kings. The one given in the 94th Chapter may be older but is not very clear. But one significant fact is that one Panchala king invaded the kingdom of Hastinapur, and the king Samvaran took refuge in the Punjab and became a follower of Vasistha and recovered the kingdom. He married the daughter of the Sun, Tapati. In India the descendants of Paurava kings as well as followers of gods Ikshaku and Bharata, took their names as Solar and Lunar dynasties.

The great fight which is mentioned in the hymns of the seventh Mandala (18, 19, 33) of the Rig Veda between Sudasa, king of the first Aryans, assisted by Tritsus, descendants of Vasistha, on the one hand, and ten kings, five of the second Aryan peoples and five of their non-Aryan allies on the other, was not amplified in the Mahabharata as the European scholars are led to believe. Since the Rig Vedic Bharatas were not the Bharatas of the Mahabharata—the descendants of Bharata, son of Dushyanta, were Lunar race Aryans—they were distinguished as Daushyanti Bharata in Satapatha Brahmana. Hence the Vedic connection which is sought to be established by means of this episode cannot stand.

Though the Mahabharata is explicitly a work which was undertaken with a view to popularise Vedic observances and practices among the people, it was done not by making the war between Sudasa and the Yadu and Turvasu the main story of the Epic in a transformed manner, but by enunciating their Vedic practices to the people at the Vedic sacrifice. Yadu was said to have been the progenitor of the Rakshasas in the forest of Crouncha (Uttarakanda Ramayana VII, Canto 69). His father Yayati called upon his sons, one after the other, to save him from the curse of his father-in-law Sukracharjya by transferring to him their youthful energy. None of his sons but Poru agreed to do so. It was a very romantic example of filial devotion and piety of the age, but it was also a sort of test for selecting a right successor to the throne in Ancient India. It will be seen that as soon as Poru agreed to do so

the king retired to the forest to practise asceticism, placing the reins of administration in the hands of his dutiful son Poru.

Valmiki, descended as he was from Sukra, combined with his relationship with Yadu, son of Devajani, the daughter of Sukra, must have uttered the verse which is said to have been the inspiration Sloka giving birth to the composition of the Ramayana. Vasistha and Vyasa are said to have suffered for the loss of their sons and the Epic owes its origin to this. Father and son are all but mortal, for which the world grew so anxious and selfish, and they are the real causes of all grief and attachment in this world. The father would not have remained for all time the satisfactory predicate of the godhead. Ancestor worship was thus displaced. It must not be lost sight of that it was in the schools of the Vedic sacrifice that the Bharata Samhita had its origin and development.

Unfortunately, the real character of the Mahabharata, its scope and functions, being perhaps misunderstood by scholars, they have stressed the literary aspect of the work concerned with the war too strongly, to the exclusion of the earlier version of the Epic, which is embodied in the Bharata Samhita. Even such a learned scholar and student of Sanskrit literature as Professor Winternitz has been misled into thinking that the really relevant portions of the Bharata Samhita, such as the Pausya Parva, the Markendaya section of the Bana Parva, and the Narayana section in the Santi Parva lie outside the scope of the Epic proper. He also thinks that the Anusashana Parva, which is nothing but a "Manual of Law", became "a component part of the Mahabharata at a still later date", and that "it bears all the marks of a late fabrication." The opinion which is so dogmatically asserted is based, no doubt, upon the erroneous conception of the true character of the Bharata Samhita, which is partly a Manual of Law.

The well known Professor Sylvain Levi has been able partially to glimpse the inmost recesses of the Mahabharata when he says "that the Mahabharata is a deliberate composition organically and artistically spread around a central fact and inspired by a dominant sentiment which penetrates and permeates it, and that it can be compared with the Vinaya, the code of discipline of the Mula-Sarvasti-vadin Buddhists." He is of opinion that the whole great Epic "with all its exaggerations and episodes, with all its varied and luxuriant mass of detail is based on nothing but a code of Kshatriya discipline as practised by the Bhagavatas."

The thesis which is here propounded is that the Mahabharata was originally intended for a wider purpose than the mere education of a certain class of men or Kshatriyas only, and that, having had its origin in one of the Vedic schools of sacrifice, it served the purpose of cultural uplift of the whole community, Aryans and non-Aryans, who congregated at these functions.

Etymologically the word Samhita means a "collection," but in its original sense it was applied to a collection of rules of conduct only with reference to the performance of sacrifices. The liturgical Samhita preceded in point of time the compilation of the Vedas as different Samhitas, which was done with a view to assist the different priests engaged in the sacrifices in the performance of their respective duties in the ceremony. The later Hindu law books took the title of Samhita, in order to acquire a special sacerdotal importance. The rules of conduct of the different castes were treated in the Dharma Sutras at an earlier period. The word for a collection of authoritative laws went by the name of Dharma Shastra. The Bharata Samhita therefore has reference to the rules of conduct which were promulgated at the sacrifices and illustrated by means of stories, and does not mean or imply the great Kurukshettra war, which later on became the central theme of the current Epic.

It may be emphasised that the real reason for the compilation of the Bharata Samhita then was to establish peace and harmony among the different warring castes and tribes. The older Vedic sacrifices had become mechanical and soulless. The rituals which were performed were not understood, the symbol implied was hardly less so. The Atri Samhita lays down that no one who did not understand the rituals should be engaged in the performance of the sacrifices. As the purpose of these reformed sacrifices was not to create an atmosphere of mysticism, as every step in the sacrifice had a deep social and almost political significance, it was necessary that every word uttered, and everything done in connection with it, should be clearly understood.

The Bharata Samhita was a work which was partly ritualistic, partly anecdotal and partly theological; it was first connected with Vedic sacrifices, and this was lost sight of by some scholars, who have been enthralled by the intensely human interest that centred on the fight between the Kurus and the Pandavas.* In fact, the great war of Kurukshettra has been so powerfully treated in the Mahabharata that it is quite natural that the great scholars of the Mahabharata should find in it the chief theme of the original Mahabharata and treat other matters not relating to this great story as lying outside the scope of the Epic proper. The internal evidence furnished by the Mahabharata itself would dispel any such notions. It will show the exact scope and features of the original Mahabharata so clearly, that the subject is reserved for a more detailed amplification in the next chapter.

It is sufficient for the purpose of this chapter to lay stress only on the salient points overlooked by many important scholars. The

*The Mbh. Udyoga Parva, Chapter CLXI, verses 29—57.

original theme of the Mahabharata was developed in the story-telling propaganda school of a particular sect of Vedic worshippers, who used sacrifices for a higher cultural purpose, and did not relate to war or any incidents of war, but was meant for elevating the masses as well as the intelligent classes to higher spiritual realisations, and sought to effect a cultural fusion of the various races and divisions of people living in India. The stories and legends introduced in the Bharata Samhita were for inculcating moral lessons, the rituals connected with the performance of sacrifice were explained with a view to spread among the people crude medical notions of primitive age embodied in the Atharva Veda, and a higher spiritual craving was imparted to the people through instructions on Narayana worship. The duties of the four Ashramas and the duties of various castes were also promulgated in the Bharata Samhita. War, gambling, hunting and drinking were shown to be evils which result in much unhappiness. The wide range of subjects and purpose covered by the original Bharata Samhita was such, that it could not be published among all classes of people except through the performance of sacrifices on a large scale, which they were all invited to attend. The Bharata Samhita was originally intended to be as much a manual for the priests as were the Taittreya Samhita and Catapatha Brahmana.

The Bharata Samhita, as has been shown previously, belongs to the period of the Vedic sacrifices, but its philosophy and examples are meant to indicate a new development in the ideology of the Vedic thinkers. It was composed in a period of transition and was meant to hasten the deep spiritual speculations of the Upanishads. It had not yet got free of its ritualistic entanglements, but it pointed to a higher way of attaining salvation. If the Bharata Samhita is the earliest stratum of the great Epic, it would be quite natural to infer that whatever is mentioned as having occurred in the earliest cycle belongs to the subject-matter of the Bharata Samhita.

It may be open to objection from two quarters, from those who have been bewildered by the rather contradictory nature of statements found in the Mahabharata and those who are opposed to any theory which would place such an early date to the compilation of the Bharata Samhita. Some of the important scholars are inclined to the view that there are very early matters which have crept into the Mahabharata, but they lie outside the scope of the Epic proper. There are other scholars, however, who believe in an earlier text represented by the Bharata Samhita, but they have not tried to find out what it was and how it was possible to transform it into its present size.

The profound Epic scholar Professor Hopkins also supports our conclusion in this matter. He also speaks of the "Anti-thesis between the old orthodoxy and the new science of thought, which not only disregards the Vedic ceremonies but condemns them". The issue is confused in the Mahabharata, but it is quite clearly brought out in the Bharata Samhita, and it is with the object of proving this contention in all its aspects that a close examination of what should be considered the texts of the Bharata Samhita becomes necessary.

If the implications and bearing of Poulama, Pousya and Astika Parvas are understood with the Narayana section of Shanti Parva along with the Shanti, Annusasana, Asvamedha and Bana Parvas, one would get as near as possible to the original text of the Bharata Samhita, which was later on amplified in the two Epics, *viz.*, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. For this it is necessary to realise the earlier and later aspects of thought represented by the hymns of the Rigveda. One would find a very close connection between these sections of the Mahabharata and the Rigveda proper—not only through the sages mentioned therein, but also a close chronological agreement between them and the period of the Rik verses.

The Bharata Samhita is connected with the Samkhya system of philosophy enunciated by Kapila, who may be held to have composed the original version of the Bharata at his Ashrama in Svetadwip—probably in South Bengal. In the Ramayana too one notes the individual strain belonging to an earlier period when Valmiki wrote his Epic on the bank of the Tamasa. It is necessary, therefore, to dwell more fully on the Ashrama-like which is portrayed so powerfully in the Pousya Parva, for not only is it a part and parcel of the Bharata Samhita, but it has influenced great Indian modern thinkers like the Indian Poet Laureate Tagore, and the late Swami Dayananda, to revive this system in the educational centres with which their names are so prominently connected. It is something like a revival of pre-Raphaelitism in India.

The university life, so rich in its varied complexities and so deeply interconnected with the complex modern life, was a heritage of the Vedic schools of thought in the later phase. Buddhism made full use of this system and under the patronage of kings and emperors they founded, on similar lines, their famous universities such as those of Nalanda, Takshashila and Vikramashila, etc. No student of Indian culture should ignore the importance of university life developed from the simple personal contact of the sages with two or three disciples to that of Naimisaranya, with a great scholar like Saunaka as its

Chancellor, to its twelve years sacrifice, and congregation of a large number of teachers before whom the examination of students took place. This description is as important for tracing the progress of educational activities of the ancient Indians as those of the celebrated Chinese scholars Fa-hien and Itsing, who described the Nalanda University.

The whole of the Narayana section of the Mahabharata, the discourse in Shanti Parva between sages as preceptors and pupils on old religion and philosophy, like Chapters 330 and 250, definitions of God and Brahma in Chapter 237, and Hari Gita in 256, and also between God Indra and early kings and their priests Kasyapa, Bhrigu, Vasistha, Agastya, etc., must have formed parts of the Bharata Samhita. Vyasa told his son Suka of the existence of old literature by the learned sages before he composed his famous Epic.

"I shall now describe to you duties havnig a very ancient orig'n and laid down by the Rishis, duties which are superior to all others."*

He described worldly affairs as an ocean and human life as a river whose landing stage of truth lay on the miry bank of anger, full of reptiles of lust and ambition, eddies of speeches of falsehood and deception. Men, endowed with learning, culture and wisdom, were alone able to reach the shore. Wise men considered this to be prized above all things in human life. One could free oneself from all anxieties like a snake which cast off its slough. One could see the soul within oneself with the lamp of knowledge. Seeing oneself within, one would acquire omniscience, ceasing of course to regard one's own body as oneself. Brahma has no sex—male, female or neuter. The person, irrespective of sexes, can acquire the knowledge of Brahma. The acquisition of this knowledge is described as the true liberation of soul and the question of re-birth, heaven and hell do not arise. This is the mystery of all mysteries and the very highest knowledge one can attain for one's salvation. The human soul did not know wherefrom it came and where it would go. This is the true ideal cultural worship of Nara Narayana of the recognised national India of the great Epic age. It is said that this knowledge of the all-pervading soul should be administered to a son who controlled his senses and was honest and submissive.

The ship cannot reach its destination unless the captain knows the use of the compass or follows the direction of the stars, measures the depths of the sea and takes due precaution against dangers lying below the surface of the water. Human life without a captain is sure to founder in the sea of troubles. The captain who is in the human breast should be awakened to use the compass of love to steer life

* Mhb. Shanti Parva, Chapter CCL, verse 2, page 376.

on a right course. This is, in short, the psychology of human success in this world below to realize what is above. Fortitude is the guard and support of all the other virtues. By looking into physical causes men's minds are opened and enlarged. Pleasure is made instrumental to the moral purpose of one's being. There is a divine message in the green fields, river-banks, the sun-beam, and moonshine, in movements of all living animals in their different modes of life and living, in building their places of rest and in following their game of hunting for their food. Glory, honour and fame are nothing but the symptoms of the infinite and progressive nature of intellect. Matter is sublime and beautiful when it is significant of mind, *i.e.*, where pleasure is made instrumental to the moral purpose of one's being. Even the cruel serpent, whose sting means sure death, hears music with rapt attention, circles round the light and dances to the flute. Death is the only reality in life to human beasts who are engrossed in enjoyments to polish their manners and disguise their faults rather than reform the heart and set right its deformities by following the footsteps of great men or their wise instructors.

It is easy for men or women to screen themselves from the penalty of human laws, but there were no such false human beings in ancient India. Not men and women but even their gods gladly exposed their sins and crimes and took the penances or made expiations gladly. Thus it speaks for itself that the ancient Hindu laws were made, not to punish the law-breakers, but were the self-imposed punishment of expiation for trivial and technical offences which law-givers committed in their youth and which were justly sought to be overlooked by kings.

Indian history as treated in the Epics and Puranas may often err on the side of extravagance, but it would leave us in a vacuum if all the materials available in them are dismissed as fabulous. Western scholars are now realising that some historical facts may be gleaned from them. The difficulty of interpreting the mass of legends embodied in Indian historical traditions may often dismay a research scholar in this difficult task, but if Indian history is to be resuscitated from oblivion, the task should not be shirked.

The Puranas and the Epics divide the chronology of Indian history into 11 cycles of Manu; facts are systematically grouped under each of these epochs of early Indian history. Each epoch is not of fabulous duration, but perhaps consisted of some definite period marked off from the rest by certain features of culture. In the Mahabharata, historical accounts are given from the first cycle of Manu (Svayambhuva Manu) to the 7th cycle (Vaivasvat Manu). The Bharata Samhita was origi-

nally a theological dissertation on Narayana which came later on to be enlarged into the present Mahabharata, and therefore the view which the learned professor holds about the Narayana section of Shanti Parva as lying outside the scope of the Epic proper might be true if by the Epic is meant the story of the war between Kurus and Pandavas, but the same cannot be said about its relation to the Bharata Samhita, of which it formed the most cardinal and central theme.

It may be asked how, if the Narayana Section of the Shanti Parva formed the pivot of the Bharata Samhita, such legends as those mentioned in the Adi Parva, *viz.*, the legend of Utamka, the fable of the elephant and tortoise, etc., and the Markendaya Section of the Bana Parva, come to be integral parts of the Bharata Samhita. The answer is that it was due to the very important fact that the Bharata Samhita came to be recited at the sacrifices and was adopted for popular use. It was necessary that people who were reached by means of story-telling should be interested. The Bharata Samhita served a multilateral purpose, and it is for this reason that its transformation into the present form was possible.

The Bharata Samhita enlightens one as to the laws and constitution of Ancient India, the power of the king and his priest, with the codes of the religion delegated to them, as it were, by God, Almighty Father. The rulers of a country or the propounders of religion may be said to be the servants of God. To personify the genius of the past age correctly one must have very different models. The picture could only emanate from a master's hand. Poets have often exhibited delightful specimens giving vivid impressions of individuals; there was nothing but sincerity and purity. The antidote to the polluting and enervating addiction to finery and voluptuousness will be found in the skilful discipline of the intellect and the cultivation of moral principles of the past. Little knowledge of the world will be discovered by attributing all failures to mere fate and misfortune. The doctrines of chance and of opportunity have grown apace in modern times. There is no spirit of contrition within the soul which will let one rest till one can do something to repair the evils of past conduct and effect a sort of reconciliation with one's heavenly as well as one's earthly father.

Earthly parents feed their children, not because they are moved by their cries; clothe them, not because they are naked. They know these necessities through selfless love. Parents have no thought, like other friends and preceptors, of a return for their good offices. They cast no oblique glances to their own interest or have reflex views on themselves. If by all their endeavours they can obtain their child's

welfare, there is no higher object to their ambition, no better accomplishment of their wishes. The infirmities of age sit upon them who feel not the troubles of life, but those sinless at the approach of death are blessed with the idea that they will be living and honoured in the memory and person of their children and pass down to the receptacle of all the living to reap the rich harvest of all their cares and labour in the duty, affection and felicity of their dear children.

Ancient Indo-Aryan history is full of the faithful picture of parent worship which formed the religious basis of the divine worship of God Almighty, the parent of the universe. The possession of this affection is only possible when the mind is well-disciplined and well-stored. " Neither give thou Aesop's cock a gem, who would be better pleased and happier if he had a barley corn " said Lord Bacon. The ass may be dressed in a lion's skin, but it can hardly change the voice which will betray it. One must be holy before one puts on the garment of the holy wise men. Brutes fear to die out of the instinct to preserve a life of enjoyment, but men do so more on account of the day of judgment or with their thought of the next world. A pious religious man has no such fear and he dies at will in peace. This has been the ideal human death of the ancient Satya Juga, when virtue reigned supreme.

> "Man makes a death which Nature never made;
> Then on the point of his own fancy falls,
> And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one."—(Young.)

This is the essence of the Bharata Samhita and the Epic kernel of Ancient India. The faith and blessings of religion, preached in the Bharata Samhita, confer an inheritance of rest and a crown of glory. Blessed be forever that parent's children when knowledge and faith have made them all children of one God and one faith of Narayana. The Ancient Indians' National God was Narayana. All sectarian priests adored and worshipped Him as superior to all gods if not the only God. This gospel of truth is preached in the book of the Hindus called the Bharata Samhita.

In the most primitive condition of society every individual has to fight for food and drink as well as comfort, but with the growth of society the question of spiritual food became a necessary element for the growth of a nation. Kings were raised to defend the country and nation against any aggression. Laws were defined from custom in consultation with elders, and punishment began to be inflicted on transgressors. The Bharata Samhita describes the origin of spiritual instructions to Brahma, from whom self-controlled sages like Sanat-Kumar and Narada receive them while Agastya, Kapila, Bhrigu and

Vasistha acquired perfection from their devotions and actual experience of worldly life.

Professor Winternitz, in the following quotation, bears out this thesis,

"Whereas, however", he says, "the Puranas maintain a certain connection with Epic poetry and are, as it were, a repertory of Indian legend poetry, the Tantras, the Samhitas, the Agamas, which differ from these but slightly, rather bear the stamp of purely theological works teaching the technicalities of the cult of certain sects, together with their metaphysical and mystical principles. Strictly speaking, the 'Samhitas' are the sacred books of the Vaisnavas, the 'Agamas' those of the Saivas, and 'Tantras' those of the Saktas."*

Action and thought go hand in hand; one may control the limbs, but how can one stay the mutiny of thought? Memory is not always a joy for it makes grief unbearable. For, when a poor tortured creature is writhing in agony with a maddened brain from thoughts of what has been, it seems to him a kind of fresh infliction. Prayer, religion and divine concentration are the weapons with which one can conquer all those wars of mind and body to which human frailty is subjected. Particular records of facts under different circumstances can benefit the understanding of the distressed to gain strength to overcome the difficulty.

The Bharata Samhita contained the duties of the four Ashramas (stages of life)—moral lessons and philosophical truths—which enabled the wise men to conceive the great Creator of the universe. The precepts were sometimes illustrated by fables and anecdotes from traditions to enlighten the unintelligent section of the general public. It eventually became the media through which the story of the conflict between Kurus and Pandavas was. almost told. It must not be lost sight of that the sacrifice had a wide and universal appeal, for it was in the schools of the Vedic sacrifices that the Bharata Samhita originated and partook of the wide outlook that one finds in the hymn whose translation is quoted below:—

"May in the Brahmin community be born Brahmins possessed of the lustre of sacred knowledge and may in this state be born Kshatriyas proficient in archery, brave and great chariot-warriors. May cows be milkgiving, oxen able to draw, horses swift, women with graceful persons and young men fond of riding chariots, desirous of winning and fit for appearing in assemblies. May this sacrificer obtain a hero son. May rain come at each time we wish for it, may planets give us good crops and may there be subsistence and welfare for all of us."

The spirit of monotheism in the Narayana cult spread like wild fire and ruled every kind of Vedic god out of order. So great was its influence over all classes of men that even the foreign invaders of India could not escape it. Its ultimate phase of divine universal love in Sri Krishna, Buddha, Chaitanya, etc., was reflected in all the religions of the world.

* Dr. Winternitz's 'A History of Indian Literature,' page 587.

One should clearly understand that Yajna had an earlier as well as a later phase in order to appreciate the important role which the Bharata Samhita occupied in the transition from one to the other. In fact, the change was brought about by the compilation of the Bharata Samhita. Instances can be multiplied of the performance of the Yajnas, which the kings and priests celebrated, by which they gained or tried to gain an immediate material reward. Their enemies tried their best to thwart them. It led to many sanguinary contests. The celebrated King Jarasandha of Magadha was about to complete his Naramedha Yajna, in which he was going to slaughter the chiefs whom he had brought in chains from various parts of India, and whose blood he was going to offer to the Great God Rudra-Devi, when Sri Krishna came secretly with Bhima and Arjuna into the enclosure of the sacrifice. Bhima killed Jarasandha under the instructions of Sri Krishna and released the imprisoned kings, who were then invited to attend the Raja-Suya sacrifice of Yudhisthira at which, however, the King Sisupala of Chedis was killed by Sri Krishna. Kamsa was slain at a sacrifice by Sri Krishna when he was invited. It was with the object of destroying the Nagas, that King Janmejoya initiated the snake or Naga sacrifice at the instance of Bhargava, but this was set at rest by the sage named Astika.

The Astika Parva, which directly bears upon the snake sacrifice undertaken by Janmejoya II, contains stories which are of great value. It helps one to find out the exact character of the earlier Samhita to which the Mahabharata owes its origin. Legends which are told in this connection show the interesting nature of the instruction conveyed to the people and bears a family likeness to similar stories found in Aesop's Fables. The famous sage Bibha Vasu could not agree to the proposal of his younger brother, Supratika, for dividing their ancestral property and cursed him to become an elephant. The younger brother, not to be outdone by the elder, also cursed his elder brother, so that he might assume the shape of a tortoise. Thus the two brothers, reborn in the forms of an elephant and a tortoise, dwelt in a tank. They could not forget their old grudge and started a great fight between themselves which caused a great noise and disturbance in the water of the tank. Garuda, the son of Kasyapa by Binata, was very hungry. He saw the two huge animals fighting with each other, seized them in his claws and flew with them to the Gandhamadana Mountains, where he made a hearty meal off them. It will be admitted that this fable contains a great moral, and, as such, it was recited at the sacrifice, and became incorporated in the Bharata Samhita.

The quarrels between Kadru and Binata, Devayani and Sarmistha, were those between co-wives, and were probably ancient historical

anecdotes. These stories illustrate on the one hand the social usages prevalent among the early Aryans, and on the other hand establish the connection of the Bharata Samhita with prominent problems of the Rig Veda, in which hymns are found on the way by which co-wives were humbled in ancient times.* It cannot be overlooked that these allegorical stories also show that the reciters of the Mahabharata never meant to travel into the historical domain but confined themselves to imparting education through fables. The story of Kadru and Binata, which occurs in the same Parva, has a still more important historical significance. This, as will be shown later on, has an important bearing on the particular Vedic school in which the Bharata Samhita originated. But these along with the chapters on royal duties and the four stages of life, the duties of different divisions of society described in the Shanti Parva as well as in the Annusasana Parva and elsewhere, constituted the original Bharata Samhita in which Mahaparusha and Narayana occur as the prime objects of worship.

From what has been said above, it is obvious that the original Mahabharata having had its origin in the sacrificial celebrations of the ancient Indians, became in course of time an account of the war between the Kurus and Pandavas. The original Bharata Samhita had nothing to do with this theme. On the contrary, it condemned violence and advocated non-violence.† Hence almost a new God unconnected with war, diplomacy and the intrigues of such Vedic gods as Indra, Varuna and Agni then comes into prominence and eclipses the others. Narayana, said to be Vishnu, a minor Vedic God, now becomes the chief deity of the land. The Bharata Samhita did not recite the glories of the Solar or the Lunar dynasties of kings, who were not then so split up into conflicting and distinct lines. The Ramayana described the Solar dynasty of kings and specially Rama, and the Mahabharata the Lunar dynasty of kings. But one significant fact one cannot overlook is that the ancient Hindu rites and ceremonies were performed, and continue to be the same even now, according to the (tithi) dates of the Lunar month because, on the corresponding dates of the Lunar month, (*i.e.*, on the same tithis) the constellations, the sun, the moon, the stars, etc., return to approximately the same relative positions as on the corresponding dates of the Solar month.

Time is an estate of God on which human life grows. The ancient monasteries of India proved to the world that the miracles of wisdom were far more beautiful and enjoyable than the fleeting pleasures of the

* Rig Veda 10th Mandala.

† Srimadbhagbat Kanda 12, Chapter VI.

senses in a country where bounteous Nature offers every opportunity for their full gratification. The sages who made an imaginary cycle of time called Manvantara, were represented as stars who performed the task of self-differentiating unity. The bird Garuda was regarded as the most powerful being, bearing as it does Narayana, the Supreme Being or the Paramatma, on its wings and fighting with Indra for the nectar. This was the prologue to the Bharata Samhita. This legend occurs in Rig 10. 114, 105 and establishes its intimate connection with the latter.

The ideal supermen of Ancient India were called Devas and their Sanskrit language and characters received the distinct epithets of Devabhasa and Devanagri, respectively. The hymns of the Vedas refer to the manifestations of Nature, which can hardly coincide with similar things in any country other than India. There is no mention of any peculiar phenomenon like the Aurora Borealis, to suggest for a moment that the Aryans' settlement was at or near the Polar regions, where that phenomenon takes place. The early Aryans were not barbarian beasts to fly or lie stupified and dumb with fear before fire or the other terrific scourges of Nature, but they prayed to be saved from them. They enlivened them with the instinctive urge to find in them the spirit of God, and invoked them with prayers, offerings and libations to propitiate Him, who alone could make them immune from the cruel operations to which no cause could be ascribed. It was thus that Varuna, the presiding deity of the Ocean, became the supreme God. There is no parallel to such a conception of God as the Vedas give in Western or in any mythology or pantheon of the world.

"There is the Varunasaman (Gram. VII, I. 18, composed on SV. I. 255, chanted on SV. II. 429-430. There are three samans of this name, see SV. ed. Calcutta, Vol. I, page 447; the last of the three is Svaram.). (22)".

"By means of this (saman) Varuna attained the reign, the supremacy. He who, in lauding, has applied the Varunasaman, attains the reign, the supremacy. (How Varuna obtained the supremacy is set forth in the Jaim. Br. (III. 152): "King Varuna was (originally) the equal of the other deities. He desired; 'May I be consecrated as king over all the Gods.' He dwelled a hundred years with Prajapati as his pupil. He (Prajapati) imparted this chant to him (saying): 'Accept this royalty, this characteristic of mine; the Gods will make thee their king'. He (Varuna) went to the Gods. The Gods seeing him approaching, got up in honour of him. He said to them: 'Do not ye get up in honour of me; ye are forsooth, my brothers I am your equal.' 'No' they said, 'we see on thee the characteristic of our father Prajapati', and they got up in honour of him. They put down for him the kings-seat, and, whilst he was seated on it, the Vasus consecrated him to royalty, the Rudras consecrated him to kingship, the Adityas consecrated him to supremacy, the All-gods consecrated him to sovereignty, the Maruts consecrated him to all-mightiness, the Sadhyas and Aptyas consecrated him to overlordship." See the text in das Jaim. br. in Auswahl, No. 188.) (23)."

"(The verses beginning:) 'Chant ye unto Mitra', being addressed to Heaven and Earth, (serve for) the Ajya(-laud) addressed to Mitra and Varuna. Heaven and

Earth, forsooth, are the favourite resort of Mitra and Varuna; by means of their favourite resort he thus appropriates them cryptically. (4)." "One (of these verses, beginning:) 'Thee, O Agni, Varuna and Mitra', is addressed to Varuna. That part of the sacrifice, which is badly performed, is seized by Varuna; this he thereby disperses by his sacrifice. (4)". "(The tristich beginning:) 'Mitra, of holy might, I call for' is the rathantara-like (ajya-laud) addressed to Mitra and Varuna, (5)" "The deities (formerly) did not yield the sovereignty to Varuna. He saw this 'Gods-stand', and, thereupon, the deities yielded to him the supremacy. His (the Sacrificer's) equals yield him the superiority. (30)". "He who knows this to his share falls the lustre of might, (and) he gets a firm standing. (31)." "Lustrous (bharga) becomes he, who in lauding has applied the Bharga (-saman), glorious (yasha) he, (who in lauding has applied) the Yasas (-saman) (32)." "There is the Vasistha (-saman); its brahmana is the same. (33)." "There is the Arka of Dirghatamas; Arka is food: for obtaining food. (34)."*

This refers to the exact implication of Arka leaf eating which made Upamanyu blind. He fell into a well, but got back his eye-sight after he recited the Asvani Kumar hymn on the advice of his preceptor. Asvani Kumars restored the Vedic sage Upamanyu his sight as a reward for his great reverence to his preceptor. The sage Chyavana got his youth from Asvani Kumars' boon and secured oblation for them in the sacrifice, fighting with Indra for it in a sacrifice of Chyavan's father-in-law. Asvani Kumars were masters of medicine and removers of difficulties. The Devas and Sages requisitioned their services. They were friends in need and friends in deed.

The origin of Pitrijajna or ancestor worship also pre-supposes an economic advance of the community among which it is introduced. From the Vedic hymns it seems that it was connected with a knowledge of the dairy, which the Aryans learned from Panis, frequently mentioned in the Vedas. Butter and cheese, which were made out of milk, became at an early time the favourite food of the Aryans, and cows were regarded by them as the chief source of wealth. For this reason one comes across hymns on water, river and butter in the Rig-Veda. The idea underlying these being offered at the sacrifices is that the people thought that merit could be acquired by sharing them with the gods and ancestors, so that their children might enjoy them in future uninterruptedly. In the hymn of praise to the departed ancestors, Yama, who is the incarnation of Dharma (religion and rectitude) to whom they go, is invoked, and the sages who are present at the sacrifices and who have come to the function to console the grief-stricken children of the deceased partake of the offerings.

The Pitrijajna, or the worship of the ancestor, may be traced to a very early period in Aryan history and hymns in the Rig Veda in connection with funeral rites must necessarily be of much earlier origin.

* Pancavimsa Brahman, pages 357—362, 391, 392 and 398.

The hymn quoted below is of great importance, for it enables us to establish connection between the Pitrijajna and a few well-known Vedic sages who are associated with important branches of Vedic literature. The hymn runs thus:—

"O Yama come and accept a seat at the Yajna, bring with thee the Fathers known as Angira. Our fathers the Angiras, Bhrigu and Atharva have come, they are entitled to drink Soma, for they wish well of us at the sacrifice, and their favours invest us with prosperity."

Thus it is quite clear that the great sages mentioned above are very intimately associated with ancestor worship. But this Vedic hymn would tend to mystify people who were assembled at the sacrifice as to it's real meaning. The Bharata Samhita, as has already been repeatedly said, is connected with the story telling which took place at the Asvamedha sacrifice and the story told on the second day of the sacrifice by the priest under the heading of Yama Vivasvan certainly refers to the story which appears in the form of an allegory in which Kama (Passion), Krodha (Anger), Kala (Time), Dharma (Piety) and Mrityu (Death) are made to appear and test the king who was willing to give and the Brahmin who refused to accept the gift at the hand of the king. The moral of this story is given below in the translation of the text bearing on the subject.

"The king said:—I am a Kshatriya. I do not know how to say the word 'give.' the only thing, O best of twice-born ones that we can say is, 'Give (us) battle.'

"The Brahmana said:—You are content with the observance of the duties of your order. Likewise, I am content with the duties of mine, O king There is, therefore, little difference between us. Do what you please.

"The king said:—You gave vent to these words first, *viz*:—'I shall give you according to my might'.—I, therefore, pray, O twice-born one, 'Give me the fruits of this, your recitation'.

"The Brahmana said:—You boasted that your words always pray for battle. Why then do you not pray for a battle with me.

"The king said —It is said that Brahmanas are armed with the thunder of speech, and that Kshatriyas have might of arms. Hence, O learned Brahmana, this wordy warfare has taken place between you and me.

"The Brahmana said:—As regards myself, this is my resolution to-day. What shall I give you according to my might? Tell me, O king of kings, and I shall give you Do not delay.

"The king said:—If, indeed, you wish to give me anything, then give me the fruits you have acquired by practising recitation for these thousand years.

"The Brahmana said:—Take the greatest fruit of the recitations I have practised, indeed take half, without any hesitation the entire fruits of all recitation. Or, O king, if you desire, take without any hesitation the entire fruits of my recitations.

"The king said:—Blessed be you, I have no necessity for the fruits of your recitations which I have begged. Blessings on your head. I am about to leave you. Tell me, however, what those fruits are.

"The Brahmana said:—I have no knowledge of the fruits I have acquired. I have however, given you those fruits that I have acquired by recitation. These, *viz.*, Dharma and Time and Yama, and Mrityu, are witnesses.

"The king said:—What will the fruits, which are not known, of these your observances, do for me? If you do not tell me what are the fruits of your recitations, let those fruits be yours, for, forsooth, I do not wish for them.

"The Brahmana said:—I will not accept any other word (from you). I have given you the fruits of my recitations. Let, O royal sage, both your words and mine prove true. As regards my recitations, I never entertained any particular desire to do. How then, O foremost of kings, should I have any knowledge of what are the fruits of those recitations? You said, 'Give!' I said, 'I give!' I shall not falsify these words. Keep the truth. Be calm. If you refuse to keep my word, O king, great sin of untruth will visit you. O chastiser of foes, you should not utter what is untrue. Likewise, I dare not falsify what I have said. I have, before this, unhesitatingly said, 'I give!'. If, therefore, you are firm in truth, accept my gift. Coming here, O king, you begged of me the fruits of my recitations. Therefore, take what I have given away, if, indeed, you are truthful. He who is given to falsehood has neither this world nor the next. Such a person cannot rescue his departed manes. How again shall he succeed in doing good to progeny? The rewards of sacrifices and gifts, as also of fasts and religious observances, are not so powerful in rescuing as truth, O foremost of men, in both this and the next world. All the penances that have been practised by you and all those that you will practise in the future for hundreds and thousands of years are not more efficacious than truth. Truth is the one undecaying Brahma. Truth is the one undecaying Penance. Truth is the one undecaying Sacrifice. Truth is the one undecaying Veda. Truth is awake in the Vedas. The fruits attached to truth have been described as the highest. From truth originate Righteousness and Self-control. Everything depends on truth.

"Truth is the Vedas and their branches. Truth is knowledge. Truth is the Ordinance. Truth is the observance of vows and fasts. Truth is the Prime Syllable Om. Truth is the origin of creatures. Truth is their progeny. It is by truth that the Wind moves. It is by truth that the Sun gives heat. It is by truth that Fire burns. It is on truth that Heaven rests. Truth is Sacrifice, Penance, Vedas, the verses of Samans, Mantras, and Saraswati. We have heard that once on a time truth and all religious observances were weighed in a scale. When both were weighed, that scale on which truth was, proved heavier. There is truth where Righteousness is. Everything multiplies through truth. Why, O king, do you wish to do false act. Be firm in truth. Do not act falsely, O king. Why do you falsify the words 'Give (me)' which you have said? If you refuse, O king, to accept the fruits that I have given you of my recitations, you shall then have to wander over the world, fallen away from Righteousness. That person who does not give after having promised, and he also that does not accept after having begged, are both stained with falsehood. You should not, therefore, falsify your own words.

"The King said:—To fight and to protect, form the duties of Kshatriyas. It is said that Kshatriyas are givers. How then shall I take anything from you.

"The Brahmana said:—I never pressed you, O king. I did not seek your house. Yourself, coming here, you yourself begged of me. Why then do you not take?

"Dharma said:—Know you both that I am Dharma himself. Let there be no dispute between you. Let the Brahmana possess the reward of gift, and let the king also obtain the merit of truth.

"Heaven said:—Know, O great king, that I am Heaven's self-incarnate, come here in person. Let this dispute between you cease. You are both equal in respect of the merit or rewards that you have acquired.

"The King said:—I have no use with Heaven. Go, O Heaven, to the place you have come from. If this learned Brahmana wishes to go to you, let him take the rewards that I have acquired.

"The Brahmana said:—In my boyhood I had, through ignorance, stretched my hand for accepting gifts. Now, however, I recite the Gayatri, observing the duty of abstention. Why do you, O king, tempt me thus, me who have for a long time followed the duty of abstention? I shall myself do what my duty is. I do not wish to participate in the rewards acquired by you, O king. I am given to penances and to the study of the Vedas, and I have abstained from acceptance.

"The King said:—If, O Brahmana, you are really prepared to give me the excellent reward of your recitation, then let half that reward be mine, you also take at the same time half the reward that I myself have gained by my acts. Brahmanas follow the duty of acceptance. Persons born in the royal order follow the duty of giving. If you are not unaware of the duties, let our fruits be equal. Or, if you do not wish to be my equal regarding our rewards, take then the whole of the rewards that I may have gained. Do take merit I have gained if you wish to show me favour.

"Bhisma continued:—'At this time two very ugly persons came there. Each had his arm upon the other's shoulder; both were ill-dressed. They said these words:—(You owe me nothing) I really owe you!—If we dispute in this way, here is the king, who governs men.

I say truly, you owe me nothing. You speak falsely.

'I owe you a debt!' Both of them, greatly exercised in dispute, then addressed the king, saying,—'See, O king, that none of us may be visited by sin!'

"Virupa said:—I owe my companion Vikrita, O king, the merits of the gift of a cow. I am willing to satisfy that debt. This Vikrita, however, refuses to accept repayment.

"Vikrita said:—This Virupa, O king, owes me nothing. He speaks an untruth under the appearance of truth, O king.

" The King said:—Tell me, O Virupa, what is that which you owe your friend here. I wish to first hear you and then do what is proper.

"Virupa said:—Hear attentively, O king, all the circumstances fully about how I owe my companion, *viz.*, this Vikrita, O king. This Vikrita had, in days gone by, for the sake of acquiring merit, O sinless one, given away an auspicious cow, O royal sage, to a Brahmana given to penances and the study of the Vedas. Going to him, O king, I begged of him the reward of that act. With a pure heart, Vikrita made a gift to me of that reward. I then, for my purification, did some good acts. I also bought two Kapila cows with calves, both of which used to give large quantities of milk. I then presented, according to due rites and with proper devotion, those two cows to a poor Brahmana living by picking solitary grains. Having formerly accepted the gift from my companion, I wish, O Lord, even here, to give him in return twice the reward. The circumstances being such. O foremost of men, who amongst us two shall be innocent and who guilty? Disputing with each other about this, we have both come to you, O king. Whether you judge rightly, or wrongly, settle our dispute and put us in peace. If this my companion does not wish to take from me in return a gift equal to what he gave me, you shall have to judge patiently and put us both on the right road.

"The King said :—Why do you not accept payment that is sought to be made for the debt that he owes to you ? Do not delay, but accept payment of what you know, to be your due !

"Vikrita said:—This one says that he owes me. I tell him that what I gave I gave away. He does not, therefore, owe me anything. Let him go wherever he likes.

"The King said:—He is ready to give you. You are, however, reluctant to take. It does not appear proper to me! I think you should be punished for this. There is little doubt in this.

"Vikrita said:—I made a gift to him, O royal sage! How can I take it back? If I am guilty in this, do you declare the punishment, O Powerful one.

"Virupa said:—If you refuse to take when I am ready to give, this king will, forsooth, punish you, for he is an upholder of justice.

"Vikrita said;—Begged by him I gave him what was my own. How shall I now take it back? You may go away. I permit you.

"The Brahmana said:—You have heard, O king, the words of these two. Do you take unhesitatingly what I have promised to give you.

"The King said:—This subject is, indeed, as deep as an unfathomable pit. How will the tenaciousness of this Reciter end. If I do not take what has been given by this Brahamana, how shall I avoid being polluted with a great sin?

"The royal sage then said to the two disputants,—'Having acquired your respective objects, go you both. I should see that kingly duties, which are in me, may not become useless. It is settled that kings should follow the duties sanctioned for them. To my misfortune, however, the course of duties laid down for Brahmanas has affected my wretched self.

"The Brahmana said:—Accept, O king! I owe you. You begged it of me, and I also have promised! If, however, you refuse to take, O king, I shall forsooth curse you.

"The King said:—Fie on royal duties, the fixed action of which is ever such! I should, however, take what you give only for making the two sorts of duty exactly equal. This my hand, that was never before extended, is now stretched forth. Give me what you owe me.

"The Brahmana said:—If I have acquired any fruits by reciting the Gayatri, accept them all.

"The King said:—These drops of water, see, O foremost of Brahmanas, have fallen upon my hand. I also wish to give you. Accept my gift. Let us both stand equal.

"Virupa said:—Know, O king, that we two are Desire and Anger. We have induced you to act thus! You have made a gift in return to the Brahmana. Let there be equality between you and this twice-born one regarding blessed regions in the next world. This Vikrita really does not owe me anything. We appealed to you for your own sake. Time, Dharma, Mrityu, and we two, have examined everything about you, here in your very presence, by creating this quarrel between you and that Brahmana. Go now as you like, to those regions of happiness which you have acquired by means of your deeds.

"Bhishma said:—I have now told you how reciters win the fruits of their Recitation and what, indeed, is their object, what the place, and what the regions, that a Reciter may acquire. A Reciter of Gayatri goes to the Supreme God Brahman, or to Agni or enters the region of Surya. If he plays there in his new form, then stupefied by such attachment, he is affected by the attributes of those particular regions. He is equally affected if he goes to Soma, or Vayu, or Earth, or Space. The fact is, he lives in all these, with attachment, and shows the attributes peculiar to those regions. If, however, after having freed himself from attachments, he goes to those regions and does not trust the happiness he enjoys and wishes for that which is

Supreme and Immutable, he then enters even that. In that case he acquires the ambrosia of ambrosia, to a state free from desire and individual consciousness. He becomes Brahma's self, freed from the influence of the pairs of opposites, happy, tranquil, and without pain. Indeed, he acquires that state which is free from pain, which is tranquil, which is called Brahma, whence there is no return, and which is called the One and Immutable. He becomes free from the four means of perception, *viz.*, Direct knowledge (through the senses), Revelation, Inference, and Intuition, the six conditions, (Hunger, Thirst, Grief, Delusion, Disease, and Death), and also the other six and ten attributes, *viz.*, five breaths, the ten senses, and the mind. Transcending the Creator (Brahman), he becomes at one with the One Supreme Soul Or, if moved by attachments, he does not wish for such absorption, but wishes to have a separate existence depending on that Supreme Cause of everything, then he gets the fruition of all his desires. Or, if he hates all regions of happiness, which have been called hells, he then, driving off desire and freed from everything, enjoys supreme happiness even in those very regions. Thus, O king, I have described to you about the end acquired by Reciters. I have told you everything. What else do you wish to hear from me?"*

The Bharata Samhita has a two-fold interest. Having its origin in the sacrificial school of the priests, it served the purpose of a popular manual for the priests; and secondly, it was a compendium of two great Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which occupy such an important and almost all-embracing part in Indian literature. In its sacrificial aspects it is connected with the Panchaya Yajna of the twice born, and the public sacrifices performed by the kings at the instance of the priests. In this respect, the story of the Mahabharata, which was foisted on the Bharata Samhita, has a more direct sacrificial connection, whereas the story of the Ramayana is closely connected with exorcism and magic, which belong to the Atharva Veda proper. The Bharata Samhita is connected with Vedic lore and with the Vedic sages, and the names of such Vedic sages as composed Vedic hymns must be given precedence in the compilation of the Bharata Samhita over those who are prominently mentioned in connection with the narration of the Mahabharata, such as Saunaka and Sauti. Saunaka and Sauti belong to an altogether later period in the evolution of Vedic culture and education. The cultural and educational phases represented in the Bharata Samhita are admitted by Western scholars like Lassen, Hopkins, Oldenburgh, etc., to belong to an earlier period. The Vedic sacrifices, then, were truly the great connecting link between the ruler and the ruled, between the king and the Brahmans on the one hand and the celebrated sages, the teachers of the whole community and whose reputation had travelled beyond the confines of their own countries, on the other. They were marked by a huge concourse of men from all the important communities of the land who became unified in culture by means of these sacrifices. The pale of Aryan

* The Mabh. Shanti Parva Chapter CXCIX, verses 41—127.

culture was widened by these sacrifices, for people not belonging ethnically to the Aryan stock received the benefit of Aryan education. They were instructed in the rules of the right conduct of life appropriate to their respective professions. Hence the performance of a sacrifice, which entailed a very heavy expenditure on the kings, was regarded as an essential sign of a successful and prosperous reign, and a triumphant achievement of Aryan culture.

In the introductory portions of the Mahabharata a short outline of the contents of the Epic are given. The main purpose for which the Epic was composed, evidently by interpolation, was the celebration of the Great War, but in the summary given in the 1st Chapter of Anukramanika, a brief outline of the contents of the Bharata Samhita is given and in this no mention is made of the internecine strife between the Kurus and the Pandavas. It was said to be a sort of Upanishad converted into a Purana, (which does not mean history) composed by Veda Vyasa to console grief-stricken King Dhritarastra. The contents of the Bharata Samhita are outlined in this connection. This portion is so important that it is quoted below with a view to ascertain the real nature of the work, which is so very often misunderstood and misinterpreted.

"In this Bharata sinless and immaculate Devas, Devarshis, and Brahmanas have been described as well as Yakshas and Great Nagas.

"In it also has the possessor of six attributes, the eternal Vasudeva, been described He is true and just, pure and holy.

"In it is described the eternal Brahma, the great true light, whose great and divine deeds, the wise and the learned men declare.

"From whom has been produced the non-existent and existent, and non-existent universe with the principle of reproduction and progression, birth and death and re-birth.

" In it has also been described He who is Adhyatma, and who partakes the attributes of the five elements and He to whom unmanifested and other such words cannot be applied.

"And also He whom the Yotis possessed of meditation and Tapa behold in their hearts as the reflection of an image in a mirror. The man of faith ever devoted, ever employed in the exercise of virtue, is freed from sin on reading this chapter of the Bharata, etc."

Now this quotation from the current Mahabharata leaves no room to doubt what was its true kernel. The main theme having had its origin in the story-telling at the time of sacrifice, swerved in the direction of a theological treatise of a popular nature. It originated in the Vedic schools of sacrifice and contained an exposition of the doctrines and practices of the Vedas, and in its theological side it had a great connection with the protestant school of the Kshatriyas, in

which discussions took place about Atman and Paramatman, and which challenged the materialism of the Brahmins as leading nowhere.

"The relationship of the Matsya Purana to the great Epic and its supplementary book, as sources", Professor Macdonell says, "is similarly intimate. (p. 300)."

The same Purana contains in the 13th Adhyaya (Chapter) a very valuable piece of information, which is that the famous Rama, the invincible slayer of Ravana, and his brothers were the worshippers of Narayana, and Valmiki, a descendant of Bhrigu, is the author of the Ramayana. The careful Western students of the Epics hold the view that the Uttarakanda cannot originally have formed part of the Ramayana. This seems to be reasonable. The story of the renowned ancestor of Jamadagni (Parashu Rama) is given in the Paulama Parva and elsewhere in the Mahabharata; but the legend may be considered an enlargement on a new basis of the simple theme of the Bharata Samhita. It should be noticed in this connection that the story of Paulama, as one has it in this version, is not the same as it occurs in the Uttarakanda, and from the conflicting nature of the legends that are grouped round Bhrigu, the ancestor of the matricide and Kshatriya slayer, the different transformations through which this legend passed are evident.

The genesis of the ancient Epic may be remembered to have originated from causes of difference between Devas and Asuras for the possession of wealth, property, beautiful women or ambrosia. This is the Bharata Samhita, the first original source of the two Epics of India, where the fights between Devas and Asuras, monarchs and kings, and priests and disciples were described. In Epic India gods fell and men rose, Asuras befriended the martial kings by marriage alliances. Indra, after killing Britta, was guilty of the crime of infidelity and could not occupy the throne of heaven, but King Nahusa occupied it through his merit, his good rule and virtuous conduct. He in turn fell from heaven when he became a slave to passions through enjoyment; then Indra again occupied his seat by good conduct and expiation. Good conduct and piety transform a man into a god and even the God of gods, if He transgressed, was not exempt from punishment. This is the lesson of life which the Bharata Samhita sought to teach. Yayati, the son of Nahusa, when in heaven, thought much of him, was condemned and was rescued by the good company of his own descendants whom he met at the time of his fall.

The sacrificial rites of the Vedas practised by the Asuras and demons like Britta and Ravana for individual benefit was soon found to be disastrous as giving power to ambitious men for their own self-gratification. The sages like Agastya, Bhrigu and Kapila first used the

spiritual powers to destroy or curb them and those accounts found a place in the Bharata Samhita. The Uttarakanda Ramayana mentions Ravana's victory over Kubera and fall before Kapila, and those portions of the Mahabharata which describe the fall of Nahusa, Kalkeya and Batapi through Agastya and Bhrigu, belong to the Bharata Samhita. In the Bharata the divinity is concentrated in one Narayana. This spiritual history of evolution and concentration, called Aikantic religion, was first traced in the Bharata Samhita. The Epic poem is of all poetical works the most difficult. The modern critics find the Western Epics fall short of their standard. The Western definition of the Epic is very important.

'Beeton's Dictionary of Universal Information' says:—"Epic poetry (ep-ik Gr., Epos, a discourse or narrative), is a kind of poetry which has outward objects for its subjects, and is thus distinguished from lyric poetry, which deals with the inner feelings and emotions of the mind. The distinction is general, for there are few productions to which it can strictly apply; but they belong to the one class or the other, according to the predominating character. The earliest specimens of this form of art probably consisted of simple tales rhythmically arranged, and recited to a very simple musical accompaniment. The longer and more artistic Epic poems, however, embrace an extensive series of events and the actions of numerous personages. The Epic poetry of the early Greeks naturally divides itself into two classes—the heroic or romantic epos of Homer, and the hieratic epos of Hesiod, the one dealing with the political, the other with the religious life of the Greeks. The 'Illiad' and 'Odyssey' of Homer present us with the finest specimens of this class of poetry that have ever appeared The sacred poetry of Hesiod partakes very much of a lyrical character. The 'Aeneid' of Virgil is not equal to the 'Illiad' of Homer as an Epic; its superiority depending more on beauty of language and arrangement than on anything in the story. The greatest Epic of modern times is the 'Paradise Lost' of Milton. Dante's 'Divine Comedy', however sublime in style, is destitute of that unity of event or action necessary to constitute a great work of this class. The 'Jerusalem Delivered' of Tasso is regularly and strictly an Epic, and adorned with all the beauties that belong to this species of composition. The Epic poem is of all poetical works the most dignified, and, at the same time, the most difficult in execution; and hence it is that so very few have succeeded in the attempt to produce a really great Epic." (Pages 792-3).

The authorship of Vyasa and Valmiki of the Indian Epics suffered in the different editions at the hands of editors, compilers and rhapsodists from age to age, till the plots and characters descended almost to dramatic fiction. The idea that good deeds which go unrewarded here will be recognised in the next world with better life and prosperity received enormous development. The terrors of the lower world, the fire of hell and the tortures of the inferna are depicted in the last act of the Mahabharata, being meant to scare evil-doers. The beloved wife Draupadi, for whom the great fight took place, fell and died, but the ideal Yudhisthira did not look at her or utter a word of sorrow for her; this is the lesson of life the great Epic teaches—what is divine or god-

like in man. Mortal man ripens like a corn and springs up again like a corn. A man, free from the stings of desires and grief, sees the majesty of the soul inside the heart and exults at meeting with that in the universe where mother, father, wife and all unite in their deaths. Yudhisthira went to heaven in person as victor of the spiritual war in the life below, a favour which Arjuna, the real victor of the Great War of Kurukshettra, could not secure for himself though called Nara Narayana; Krishna being called Narayana the principal adviser and director of the Great War. Even the hero of the Ramayana could not ascend to heaven in person.

Mythology represents the mental background of the people of the later Rig Vedic age. Men used to attach much importance to and place great faith in re-birth. The battle of ten kings in which Sudasa Parjavana met his doom for his haughtiness (Manu VII. 41) is mentioned in the Rig Veda where it is said that Sudasa Parjavana fought the Bharata. There is also mention of the fights with Sambaran and with the Panchala king. In the first he was defeated and fled, and in the second, with the help of Vasistha, he recovered his kingdom. Vasistha is the priest of the Solar dynasty of kings and Visvamitra that of the Videhas, and they were more or less concerned with all the incidents of these Epics. Vasistha was connected with the victory of Sambarana and perhaps with his matrimonial alliance with the Ikshaku family and with his giving battle to the Sudas king and with the ten kings successfully. The most famous Rajarsi Arkadanta was the Somaka Sahadevya of the Mahabharata. He became so famous by performing sacrifices that the general public thought that the great ancestor of the Kaurova and Panchals was re-born in Somaka, who was invested with the title of Arkadanta. His lineal descendants were lost. Nila of Puranas and Nipa of Harivamsa are said to have descended from him. Likewise Devapi's line is not known. From the distinguished line of Arkadanta, Draupadi, the great heroine of the mythological and dramatic Mahabharata, and Dristadyumna descended.

The mythology of India is a very difficult subject—it is neither the false glory of heroic poetry nor the inflated pride of ancient philosophy. It is an attempt to dèvelop and explain abstract ideas of religion, philosophy and love by putting them into the garb of concrete examples of humanity in the progress of time and advancement. It has been the product of the highly developed and concentrated Indo-Aryan mind of the growing ages of the past. True felicity is not to be derived from external possessions but from real wisdom, which consists in the proper exercise of knowledge and virtue. Humility is the attribute of great

and noble minds and presumption is the associate of ignorance. Books cannot teach anybody anything unless one makes an independent observation and endeavours to find the hidden truth behind the simple account. To create this curiosity in men, mythology grew up. The learned and the wise always record their experience from the results of their observations in the accounts of the glorious past. That one must penetrate beyond the surface of things into the hidden treasures is the aim of Hindu mythology.

In ordinary history man is remembered by his birth and deeds, but in religious history it is not so. In it a man finds a place if he has brought to light the life of the soul and what is infinite in man and in all the universe, and its immortality gives cultural re-birth as an integral part of religious history. The ancient Hindus called themselves Dvija or Aryan, and those who were not blessed with the religious birth were Dasas or non-Aryans. It was not a question of colour or creed or anything else. It must be said that the great Epic is not the history of the Kuru-Panchal or Pandava fight as Western scholars and Eastern students take it, but it was, in fact, the spiritual fight of the souls of men who were called blind, inert, fragile, against the perfect, loving, dutiful, heroic and beautiful. Yudhisthira reflected the perfect soul, Sri Krishna the loving-soul of the Universe, Arjuna the dutiful, Bhima the heroic and Draupadi the beautiful soul against the blind soul of Dhritarastra, inert soul of Durjodhana and fragile soul of Karna. The hero of the Mahabharata is neither Sri Krishna, nor Arjuna, nor Bhisma, but Yudhisthira, the incarnation of virtue and truth. This is the theme of the great Epic of India.

The little vanity, like a sunspot, that there must be in a perfect man like Yudhisthira, is condemned by Sri Krishna in clear terms after the war which was his sight of hell—what the poet author represented in the Mahaprasthan Parva. The real incidents in the history of the war, both spiritual and actual, are told by Krishna in the Asvamedha Parva. Sri Krishna's words to Yudhisthira should be written in letters of gold:—

"All crookedness of heart brings on destruction, and all rectitude leads to Brahma. This and this only is the aim and object of all true wisdom, what can mental distraction do (to him). Your Karma has not yet been destroyed nor have your enemies been subjugated, for you do not yet know the enemies that live within your own body.*"

Sri Krishna recites what is better than his lesson in the Gita to Arjuna in the war of Indra-Britta. The annotator Nilkantha speaks very highly of the spiritual lesson of the Asvamedha Parva, where Sri

* The Mahabharata, Chapter XI, Asvamedha Parva, page 13, Slokas 4 and 5, (M. N. Dutt's English Translation).

Krishna gave the true history of the Great War, as witnessed by him, to his father. It is worth mentioning here those portions of the description which will belie the versions of the rhapsodists:—

"The battle between the Kurus and the Pandavas went on for ten days. It was so dreadful as to make one's hair stand erect. Bhishma of Kuru's race became the Commander-in-chief, having eleven divisions of the Kaurava princes under his command, like Vasava of the celestial forces. Highly intelligent Shikhandin, protected by the blessed Arjuna, became the leader of the seven divisions of the sons of Pandu. Then Shikhandin, in great battle, helped by the holder of Gandiva, killed, with innumerable arrows, the son of Ganga, fighting bravely. Lying on a bed of arrows, Bhishma waited like an ascetic till the sun, leaving his southward path, entered on his northerly course, when that hero died. Then Drona, that foremost of all persons conversant with arms, that greatest of men under Durjodhana, like Kavya himself of the lord of the Daityas, became the Commander-in-chief. That foremost of twice-born persons, ever boasting of his prowess in battle, was supported by the residue of the Kaurava-army consisting then of nine Aukshauhinis, and protected by Kripa and Brisha and others. Dhrishtadyumna, familiar with many powerful weapons, and gifted with great intelligence, became the leader of the Pandavas. He was protected by Bhima like Varuna protected by Mitra. That great hero, always desirous of comparing his strength with Drona, supported by the Pandava-army, and recollecting the wrongs inflicted (by Drona) on his father (Drupada, the king of the Panchalas) performed great feats in battle. In that battle between Drona and the son of Prishata, the kings assembled from various realms were nearly rooted out. That furious battle lasted for five days. At the conclusion of that period, Drona, exhausted, succumbed to Dhrishtadyumna. After that, Karna became the Commander-in-chief of Durjodhana's forces. He was supported in battle by the residue of the Kaurava-army, which numbered five Aukshauhinis. The Suta's son Karna, though a dreadful warrior, encountering Partha, came to his end on the second day, like an insect encountering a burning fire. Then, in the great battle that took place, the royal son of Dhritarasthra was killed by Bhimasena, after displaying his great prowess, in the presence of many kings.*"

The quotation exposes the hollowness of the unjust charges of unlawful tactics practised by the Pandavas on the battlefield.

"In this frail life are worthy to be blest
Held glorious and immortal when at rest."

Rama and Krishna, Sita and Radha receive the greatest adoration in the religion of the Hindus. The two beautiful ideal princesses, Sita and Draupadi, are original and unique characters in the Epic world. Epics describe the death and destruction of great kings and kingdoms for selfish wordly love. The Indian Epics go further than this. They describe religious worship, morality, law, national pride and civilization, and present ideal examples of filial, parental, conjugal, fraternal love and friendship ripening in a true love of self-sacrifice and transcending into divine love, the essence of religion and nationality in Ancient India. All of them descended from the well-known families of Vedic India,

*The Mahabharata Chapter LX, Asvamedha Parva, page 72 (M. N. Dutt's English Translation). Versus 10, 8-9, 11—19, 21 and 30.

the Yadavas, the Kurus and Panchals as well as the Ikshakus. This speaks of the age of the Indian Epics.

The Mahabharata and the Ramayana have fascinated the greatest scholars of the day all over the world. It has been admitted by the greatest Western Sanskrit scholars, like the late lamented Professor Max Muller, that no Epic of the world can approach the Indian Epics both in conception and execution. The Mahabharata, notwithstanding its unwieldy mass and alleged inconsistency, is one of the grandest and greatest Epics of the world. Superficial reading will not make anyone realise its beauty. It demands an extensive and thorough knowledge of ancient civilisation and its growth from Sanskrit literature and philosophy. The Ramayana is not so difficult as the Mahabharata as will appear from the fact that the former has no commentator. The Mahabharata has many commentators, and amongst them Nilkantha seems to have been the latest and most revered and authoritative. He has not annotated every section of the Mahabharata but only dealt with the most important and their respective relations one with another.

It is indeed regrettable that Western scholars have not studied the different views of these annotators or even Nilkantha, but were simply carried away by their own imagination and made deductions or findings according to their own angle of vision. East is East and West is West, like the Poles asunder, and so very different that they cannot meet. The Vedas mention the names of Pururad, Santanu and Devapi, and the Mahabharata adds the names of their descendants, whose names have now passed into familiar Indian proverbs which convey easily to the mass the clear, unequivocal implications their names signify in common parley even now. Dhritarastra and Pandu, Bidura and Bhisma, Yudhisthira and Durjodhona, Arjuna and Karna, Bhima and Sakuni, Sri Krishna and Balarama, Kunti, Gandhari, Draupadi, Subhadra and Satyabati have been the moving spirits and centre of attraction in the Mahabharata, as Rama, Ravana, Bharata, Bhivisana, Lakshmana, Kakeyi and Sita have been in the Ramayana. Dasaratha and Meghnada are the great sacrifices on the altar of worldly love of a father and a son, which certainly speaks of a later age than the Mahabharata.

There is no commentator of the Ramayana, which proves that nothing difficult was found which required the help of a commentator. No one can blame Western Sanskrit scholars for all the adverse criticism they so gratuitously offered on so hard a work, requiring so many commentators in the land of its birth and confused and enlarged at the time of alien Governments, when the question of Hinduism and Hindu scripture were left to the mercy of cruel times, and foreign invasions and misrepresentation. They expressed their honest convictions with-

out thinking for a moment that they would thus be betraying their ignorance and lack of necessary information on the subject.

"The poem in its present form absolutely takes the part of the Pandavas, and describes the Pandavas as not only brave beyond measure, but also as noble and good, and on the other hand represents the Kauravas as treacherous and mischievous,—the poem, in remarkable self-contradiction, relates that all the heroes of the Kauravas fall through treachery or in unfair fight. It is still more striking that all the treachery emanates from Krsna, that he is always the instigator of all the deceit and defends the conduct of the Pandavas. .... In the mouths of these bards those alterations were then undertaken which made the Pandavas appear in a favourable light and the Kauravas in an unfavouralbe one, without its being possible to eradicate completely the original tendency of the songs. In our Mahabharata, the nucleus of the Epic, the description of the great battle is placed in the mouth of Sanjaya, the charioteer of Dhritarastra, that is, in the mouth of the bard of the Kauravas. It is precisely in these battle scenes that the Kauravas appear in the most favourable light. The whole Mahabharata, on the other hand, is recited, according to the frame-story contained in Book I, by Vyasa's pupil, Vaisampayana at the snake-sacrifice of Janmejoya. This Janmejoya, however, is regarded as a descendant of the Pandava Arjuna, which agrees well with the fact that, in the Mahabharata as a whole, the Pandavas are preferred to the Kauravas.*"

It will be seen that Janmejoya himself had misgivings, like the Western scholars, and called upon Vyasa to clear the points, and this formed the nucleus of the Mahabharata. There is hardly any justification for making reckless and wrong allegations against the Pandavas when the bard Sanjaya, of the opposite camp, king Dhritarastra and Gandhari spoke in favour of the Pandavas. The translations of the texts about the version related herein will speak for themselves :—

"Sanjaya said:—Alas, as I have seen everything with my own eyes, I shall tell you all. Hear me patiently. Great indeed is your fault. O king, these lamentations of yours are as useless as the construction of embankments when the waters have receded from a flooded field. O foremost of the Bharatas, do not indulge in grief. The decrees of Destiny are wonderful and inevitable. O foremost of the Bharatas, do not give way to grief, for these things are not unique. If in days gone by, you had prevented Kunti's son Yudhisthira or your own sons, from the tournament at dice, then this calamity would not have overtaken you. If, again, on the eve of the battle, you had prevented the enraged parties from joining in the battle, then this calamity would not have overtaken you. If, again, you had previously induced the other Kurus to put an end to the existence of the refractory Durjodhana, then this calamity would never have overtaken you. If; indeed, you had done one of these alternatives, then the Pandavas, the Panchalas, the Vrishnis, and the other rulers of earth had never had the reason for blaming you for your perverted understanding. If, again, doing the duty of a father, you had (by directing Durjodhana on the path of virtue) compelled him to follow in the same path, then this calamity would never have befallen you. You are the wisest man on the face of the earth. But inspite of your being so, you accepted the counsel of Karna, Durjodhana and Sakuni, abandoning the ways of eternal virtue. Therefore, O king, all these lamentations of yours that I have heard,—you who are absorbed in the enjoyment of worldly objects—appear to me to be like honey mixed

* Dr. Winternitz's "A History of Indian Literature" pages 454—456.

with poison. In days gone by, Krishna did not hold king Yudhisthira the son of Pandu, or Bhisma, or Drona, in so high an estimation as he did hold you, O king. But when he came to know you fallen from the duties of royalty, that time forward, he did not respect you as before. When your sons applied harsh epithets to the sons of Pritha, you assumed an indifferent attitude. The result of that indifference of yours has now overtaken you—you who long to see your sons installed on the throne. O sinless one, the royalty you inherited from your forefathers, is now going to slip off your hands; or, on the other hand, you will have it, obtaining it from the sons of Pritha (who would certainly snatch it away from your sons after slaying them). The dominions of the Kurus and their fame, had been required by Pandu, and the right-behaving sons of Pandu have again added to that fame and those dominions. All those endeavours of theirs became fruitless when indeed their interests clashed with yours, inasmuch as they were despoiled of their ancestral sovereignty by your very avaricious self. So, O King, the fact of your attributing blame to your sons at the time of the actual warfare, and the fact of your expatiating on their faults, indeed, seem very unbecoming."*

"Then did the daughter of king Suvala, afraid of the extinction of her race, say out of anger these words which where virtuous and conducive to the benefit of her inhuman and wicked-souled son Durjodhana in the midst of these kings "Let these rulers of the earth, who have entered this royal council, as also these regenerate Rishis and all others in this council, hear what I am going to say about the sin committed by yourself, O wretch, and your ministers and followers. The kingdom is obtainable by us in a certain fixed order; this has been the custom with our race, but you, O you of sinful intellect and of very inhuman deeds, desire unjustly to ruin the kingdom of the Kurus. The wise Dhritarastra is now established on the throne and under him as a subordinate is Vidura of great foresight; superseding these two how can you, O Durjodhana, desire the kingdom out of folly ? The king himself and Vidura of great soul, are, so long as Bhisma is alive, but his subordinates; in fact, owing to his being conversant with virtue, the one born of the river (Ganga), that foremost of kings does not desire the kingship. This kingdom, incapable of being subjugated, belongs to Pandu and now his sons are lords over it and none (else). This entire kingdom, coming from their father goes to the sons of Pandu, and to their sons and grandsons. What that foremost among the Kurus, that great souled one of divine vows, ever attached to truth endowed with intelligence, says, should in its entirety, be done by us, for the sake of our kingdom and the duties of our order. Let this ruler of men as also Vidura by the command of the one of great vows speak the same thing that is an act that should be done by our well-wishers who should place virtue above all consideration. Let the son of Dharma Yudhisthira rule over the kingdom of the Kurus, obtained justly, led by Dhritarastra and placing the son of Shantanu at the helm of affairs.'†.

"Vasudeva said :—Words like these having been spoken by Gandhari that lord of men, Dhritarastra said these words to Durjodhana in the midst of the kings. 'O lord of men, O Durjodhana, listen to what I am going to say. my dear son, and act according to that if you entertain respect for your father. It will be well with you. That lord of creatures, Soma was the first who begot the race of Kurus, and sixth in descent from Soma was Yayati the son of Nahusa. He had five sons, the best among royal sages and of them Yadu of great energy was the first, and was the lord. Younger than he was Puru and he was our ancestor ; he

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* Professor M. N. Dutt's "Translation of the Mahabharata", Drona Parva, Chapter LXXXVI, page 125, verses 1—17.

† Professor M. N. Dutt's "Translation of the Mahabharata", Chapter CXLVIII, page 204. Udyoga Parva, verses 23—36.

was brought forth by Sharmistha, the daughter of Vaishaparvan. Yadu, O foremost among the Bharatas, was the son of Devayani, and was therefore the grandson of Shukra, the wise Rishi of immeasurable energy. The ancestor of the Yadavas, endued with strength and prowess as he was, being full of pride and vanity and wicked intelligence, insulted the Kshatriyas. He did not act up to the instructions of his father, being stupified by the pride of his strength; and having never sustained a defeat he insulted his father and his brothers. In the four quarters of the globe, Yadu was the strongest man and having brought all the rulers of men under subjection he lived in the city called after the elephant. His father, Yayati, born of Nahusha, being very much angry with him, cursed his son O son of Gandhari, and exiled him from the kingdom. Those brothers who followed the lead of the elder brother, vain of his strength, were also cursed. The great king Yayati, having cursed these sons placed his second son Puru, who remained devoted to him, on the throne, which indeed was suitable. It is evident thus that even the eldest son can be superceded and deprived of the kingdom; and even a younger son can get the kingdom for his attentions to the aged. Thus was also the grandfather of my father, conversant with all virtues, Pratipa the ruler of the universe and known in the three worlds. That lion among the rulers of the earth, while ruling his kingdom virtuously had born to him three sons of renown and having the attributes of the gods. Of them Devapi was the foremost (eldest) and then came Valhika; and the third Shantanu; that wise-man was my grandfather. Devapi, that best among kings though endued with great energy, had a defect in his skin; but he was a virtuous man, a speaker of truth and ever devoted to attending on his father. Devapi was honoured by all the subjects and citizens and respected by the good and he was loved by all—the old and the young. He was benevolent, attached to truth and devoted to the good of all creatures and ever obeyed the command of his father as also of the Brahmanas. He was the dear brother of Valhika and also of the great souled Shantanu; in fact among all those great souled men excellent brotherly feelings existed.

'In course of time, that old king, the best among rulers of men, had all arrangements made for the installation according to the holy books (of his son). That lord had all auspicious arrangements made, but the Brahmanas and the old men amongst the citizens with the subjects of the province, all dissuaded him from installing Devapi; and that ruler of men, having heard of the exclusion of his elder son from the installation, had his voice choked with tears and became sorrowful for his son. Though he was benevolent, conversant with virtue, attached to truth, and loved by his subjects, yet he had a defect in his skin. The gods do not approve of that ruler of men who has a defect in his limbs. So saying, those foremost among the twice-born dissuaded that foremost among the rulers of men. Devapi too, who was defective of one limb, seeing that ruler of men with his heart pained and struck with grief for his son, dissuaded him from carrying out his intentions and went to the woods Valhika, too, giving up his kingdom, established himself in the family of his maternal uncle, and abandoning his father and brother he obtained a very wealthy kingdom. Being commanded by Valhika, Santanu, well-known in this world, on the retirement of his father, became, O king, the king in that kingdom. In the same way, myself though the eldest, was excluded from the kingdom owing to the defect in my limbs, O Bharata, in favour of Pandu, endued with good understanding, after due reflection. That ruler of men Pandu too obtained the kingdom though he was younger and at his death this kingdom, O chastiser of foes, belongs to his sons. Myself having never participated in the kingdom, how do you desire it, being the son of one who was never a king. You are not a king, and yet you desire to take another's property. Yudhisthira is the son of a king and is a great soul; and this kingdom justly goes to him. He being endued with great attributes

is the lord of the Kuru race as also the ruler of the kingdom. He is attached to truth and is never beside his senses; he follows the teachings of the Holy books and does good to his friends; he is an honest man and is dear to his subjects; he feels for his well-wishers, has his senses under control and is the lord of honest men. Forgiveness, patience, self restraint, sincerity, devotion to truth, a good appreciation of the Holy books, benevolence, love to creatures and ability to rule justly, all these attributes of a king are in Yudhisthira. You, on the other hand, are the son of one who has never been a king; you lead the life of a dishonourable man, you are covetous, ever have wicked intentions towards your friends; O you not endowed with humility, how under these circumstances can you take this kingdom which belongs to others and which comes to the successors according to a certain order. With your folly removed, give over one half of the kingdom with its animals and royal garments; and the remainder will be enough for your own living and that of your younger brothers.*"

These words of good advice had no effect on Durjodhana as also the advice given by the parents and the patriarchs Bhisma and Drona, for Durjodhana sternly refused the peace proposal of Krishna on behalf of the Pandavas with these significant words :—

"O Krishna, when I depended on others the Pandavas had that kingdom which ought not to have been given away. It might be out of ignorance or fear the Pandus got it, but now they were required to win it. So long as I have strength in my arms I would not without fight part with even a piece of land of the dimension of the point of a sharp needle.†"

The gist of the reply of Krishna settles the characteristic traits of Durjodhana. This is as follows :—

"O Fool! you seem to think that there is nothing against your conduct towards the Pandavas, but all the kings present here know full well how you, being jealous of their prosperity, you in consultation with Sakuni arranged a game of dice and deprived them unjustly of their wealth and property and disgraced them in every way. Who else but yourself could ill-treat the wife of your elder brother in the manner as you did in the open Council Hall, using all sorts of abusive language with your friend Karna? You spared no pains to destroy them from their early youth by employing all sorts of evil methods, *e. g.* snakes, rope, water and fire. If you do not give them their just paternal property and share in the kingdom, know ye wicked fellow, you shall have to do so when you will be overthrown and deprived of your prosperity by them. Your desire to die the death of a hero will then be fulfilled. You are disregarding the good advice of your well-wishers. What you intended doing will not lead you to any fame or virtue. Peace is the most desirable thing for you but alas! that you could not discern through the weakness of your intellect."

His open censure on the Kuru elders, headed by Bhisma and Drona, is no doubt worthy of mention :—

"It is your great fault that you do not restrain the wicked Durjodhana, who had been guilty of very great misconducts in your very face. You have bright examples before you how the throne of the old Bhoja King, usurped by Kansa, was recovered by me. Nor is this all. The great Dharma by the command of

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* Professor M. N. Dutt's "English Translation of the Mahabharata" Chapter CXLIX, pages 204 to 206. Udyoga Parva, verses 1—36

† English Translation of Udyoga Parva, Chapter CXXVII.

the Pârâmesthi made over all the Danavas and Daityas to Varuna and they were all imprisoned in the sea. Now it is your turn to make over the wicked Durjodhana, Karna, Sakuni and Dushasana to the Pandavas bound head to foot if you do not want extermination of the Kshatriya race in the fight."

The meeting of the two important relatives Kunti, mother of the Pandavas, and their messenger of peace Krishna is a very important event in Epic history. The majestic Queen of Pandu, the model of forbearance, virtue and martial spirit tells as a lesson to her sons the story of Bidula in whose real interpretation success will lie.* Here the good lady recited the words of the heavenly voices heard on the births of the two heroes Bhima and Arjuna; and in Santi Parva† the great Bhisma admonished Yudhisthira, that the line of his conduct was not in consonance with the boon of his birth with which his parents were blessed. These questions are very important as they show the position of the parties in relation to past history and the just claim of the parties to the throne by the responsible head Dhritarastra and his Queen. The boon of birth of the Pandu heroes was spoken of by Bhisma and Kunti, which settled the question of fancy tales of Divine Birth.

The great fight of the Mahabharata was for the division of the paternal properties and that of the Ramayana was for punishing the demon Ravana, who stole the Queen of Rama and kept her in captivity. In the case of the former it was a fight in which all the kings of India took sides with the contending parties, whereas in the latter no other kings or human beings but the brother of the demon king Ravana and the brother of the monkey king, Bally, were implicated. In the Ramayana the exploits of Rama were chronicled with the poetic embellishment of Kavya literature, whereas in the Mahabharata the heroic deeds of the Kurus, Pandavas and their respective followers were described graphically. Each section deals with the deeds of the principal heroes of the campaign, a style not to be found in the Ramayana. If the Ramayana had been written first then its method surely would have been followed by the Mahabharata. But it was not.

European scholars have found the Ramayana an Epic according to their ideas, but it is not according to the views of the author. It is a Kavya out and out and not an Epic in the true sense of the Indian

*(18). This story which is called Jaya (victory) should be heard by one who is desirous of victory; and hearing it one conquers the world speedily and vanquishes his enemies. (19). This story makes a woman bring forth a son and a heroic son; a pregnant woman hearing it repeated many times certainly brings forth a hero. Mbh. Udyoga Parva, page 189, Chapter CXXXVI. verses. 18-19.

†(22). The conduct you wish to follow, urged on by your intelligence and wisdom, is not quite of a piece with those blessings which your father Pandu or your mother Kunti used to solicit for you. (Shanti Parva, Chapter LXXV, page 112).

view. The Mahabharata is not a book of one family of kings of Ajodhya, like the Ramayana. It is a book in which all the princes of India, whose forefathers laid down their lives in the famous battle of Kurukshettra, were interested. The exploits of the All-India heroes were given the honour of a section of the great book in the description of the Great War with the history of the time and were preserved in the realms of the descendants of those heroes by their court reciters, to be recited at state functions and sacrifices. This is the true cause of the unusual growth of the Mahabharata, and the many repetitions and sometimes even contradictions in it. All these sections were strung together by the princes to make them a consistent whole. It was during this process that the Ramayana was introduced into the Mahabharata as its consistent part, being the glory of the kings of Ajodhya, who did not play any prominent part in the battle of Kurukshettra. The substance of the historical truth about Bhisma, Drona, Karna and Salya can be gathered as well as why the old patriarchs fought for the unjust side of Durjodhana. This should first be seen and learned.

Bhisma is one of the greatest heroes and wise-men of the Bharata race. His education is described by Vyasa as follows:—

"Vaishampayana said:—'Then Vyasa, O King, that foremost of all persons conversant with the Vedas, looking at that ancient and omniscient person *viz.*, Narada, said,—If O King, you wish to hear of duties and morality at length, then ask Bhisma, O mighty-armed one, that old grandfather of the Kurus. Conversant with all duties and endowed with universal knowledge that son of Bhagirathi will remove all your doubts regarding the difficult subjects of duties. That goddess, the celestial river of three courses gave birth to him. He saw with his physical eyes all the celestials headed by Indra. Having pleased with his dutiful services the celestial Rishis, headed by Brihaspati, he acquired a knowledge of royal duties. That foremost one among the Kurus acquired a knowledge also of that science, with its interpretations, which Ushanas and the Rishi who is the preceptor of the celestials knowledge. Having practised rigid vows, that mighty-armed one obtained a knowledge of all the Vedas and their branches, from Vashishtha and from Chyavana of Bhrigu's race. In the days of yore he studied under the eldest son of the grandfather himself, *viz.*, the effulgent Sanatkumara, well conversant with the truths of mental and spiritual science. He learnt the duties in full of the Yatis from Markendaya That foremost of men learnt science from Rama and Shakra. Although born as man, his death itself is in his own hands. Although childless, yet he has many blissful regions hereafter as heard by us. Rishis of great merit were his courtiers. There is nothing on earth which is unknown to him.'"*

It will be seen that Bhisma is more a romantic personage than an actual being. If his descent according to genealogy is to be considered, he could not see Indra in person, he could not be the pupil of Sanatkumar, Chyavan, and Brihaspati and at the same time read lectures to Yudhisthira. Of course the ancient sages were very careful men and

* The Mbh: Shanti Parva, Chapter XXVIII, page 58. Verses 5—15.

they saved the question of anachronism with certain persons like Parasurama, Bali etc., by making them immortals, but such cannot be the case with Bhisma. His birth and dying at will do not synchronise with the said sages and deity Indra. He saw and learnt his lessons. Besides, neither this name nor those of Drona or Salya, who were the reputed Commanders-in-chief, were mentioned in the table of contents in Adi Parva, Chapter I, or another table of contents in Adi Parva, Chapter 62. Also, his fight with Parasurama for a trivial cause, that of not taking part in revenging Gandharba Chittrangada, who killed Bhisma's brother of that name, seems rather strange. Vedabati's transformation into Sita in the next life and Amba's transformation into Shikhandi cannot form part of Epic history, though they are mentioned in the Uttarakanda Ramayana and Mahabharata, respectively. In the current Mahabharata the character of Bhisma (Debabrata) is inconsistent and anomalous. The same can be said about Drona and Salya. There is hardly any justification for Bhisma or Drona or Salya fighting for Durjodhana when they were at heart praying for the *victory of the Pandavas*. It is clearly said in Bhisma Parva, Chapter 13, that depending on Bhisma's strength Durjodhana dared to play a deceitful game of dice. There is a clear mention by Sanjaya in Chapter 65 of the Bhisma Parva that the Pandavas did not fight wrongfully.

"Sanjaya said :—Hear, O king, with perfect attention, and hearing do you understand what you hear There was nothing the result of incantation and nothing the production of illusion. Neither, O monarch, did the sons of Pandu create any new source of apprehension, those warriors endowed with strength are fighting their battles according to the rules of fair combat. The sons of Pritha, O Bharata, desirous of securing illustrious fame ever perform all acts— even the maintenance of their lives—in perfect accordance with the rules of morality. Attended by excellent prosperity and endued with great strength and conforming to all morality, they never turn back from the fight. Victory ever attends righteousness. For this reason, O ruler of earth, the sons of Pritha are unslayable in battle and are ever courted by victory. Your sons are of wicked intentions and are intent on perpetrating sin; they are cruel and of low deeds ; therefore are they always worsted in the battle. O ruler of men. Various heartless injuries were done to the Pandavas by your sons, like men of low extraction. You are disregarding all those offences of your sons."

Bhisma was a great admirer of Krishna, if not his ardent follower. It is inconceivable that his name was not mentioned in the Srimad Bhagabata where Bidura, Kunti and other characters of the Mahabharata who were attached to Krishna, were given. Bhisma however, cannot, be justified as a historical character who can be identified with the title of Debabrata, especially when he excused his fighting an unjust cause on the grounds of being maintained out of the resources of the Kurus. Bhisma's birth mythology is not supported by any Vedic accounts and necessarily he cannot belong to such an early age as against the time which the genealogy of his birth fixes. Bhisma is not mentioned in the

family history just quoted (in Udyoga Parva, Chapter CXLVII). Bhisma's birth is ascribed to the sacred river Ganges, which is altogether a myth. The dialogue between father and son in the Mahabharata conveying this important point illustrating the sacrifice of Bhisma was translated by Professor Max Muller thus :—

"Thou dost advise that I should please
With sacrifice the deities.
Such rites I disregard as vain ;
Through these can none perfection gain.
Why sate the gods, at cruel feasts,
With flesh and blood of slaughtered beasts?
For other sacrifices I
Will offer unremittingly ;
The sacrifice of calm, of truth,
The sacrifice of peace, of ruth,
Of life serenely, purely, spent.
Of thought profound on Brahma bent.
Who offers these, may death defy,
And hope for immortality.
And then thou says'st that I should wed,
And sons should gain to tend me, dead,
By offering pious gifts, to seal,
When I am gone, my spirit's weal.
But I shall ask no pious zeal.
Of sons to guard my future weal.
No child of mine shall ever boast
His rites have saved his father's ghost.
Of mine own bliss I'll pay the price,
And be myself my sacrifice."*

Pleasure, health and wealth grow out of the rivers and the resort of the great god Narayana is water. It is for this reason that the images of gods are thrown into the river after worship even now. It is well-known that the orthodox Hindus offer water to the manes of this godlike Bhisma even now along with their forefathers, so great is the popularity of the Hindu Epics in India. Bhisma followed in the wake of Poru, but Rama of the Ikshaku race went into exile for his step mother.

It was a time to try dutiful sons, but in the case of Yudhisthira it was a time of jealousy between cousins due to the uncle's indulgence and the intrigue of their relatives. The dramatic Mahabharata, which introduced Bhisma's prowess as the mainstay for the attainment of their vicious ends at the dice play, is nothing less than the murder of the whole thing—in fact, there the death of Bhisma took place. That Bhisma, who failed to answer the intricate question put by Draupadi in the dice hall, could not be the preceptor

*Professor Max Muller's "Collected Works," pages 34-35.

of Yudhisthira, whom Bhisma called upon to answer the questions put to him. Bhisma was made to play the very low role of a retainer of the Kuru Cou rt. He with Drona, Kripa, etc., were made to fight for Durjodhana against their own personal independent will, as they avowed that they were quite helpless in having to fight an unjust cause as they were maintained by the Kuru Court. Likewise Bhisma became a reciter of old legends he knew as instructive to the ruler of the Kuru Court when he won the war. The dutiful Bhisma recited these even when he was dying and lying in state for the proper time to die. This is nothing less than a romance.

Yayati called upon his sons to prove their filial love and piety and bestowed the throne on the only dutiful son Poru. This is what the Bharata Samhita describes. The Mahabharata took the son of the ideal monarch Santanu as its model and called him God-like-vow-observer or Debabrata or Gangeya.

"Vaishampayana said :—Having said this, the goddess disappeared then and there. Taking her son with her, she went away to the place she wished to go That son of Santanu was named both Gangeya and Devabrata, and he excelled his father in all accomplishments. Santanu then went to his own capital with a sorrowful heart. I shall now narrate to you the many accomplishments of Santanu. And the great fortune of the illustrious king of the Bharata race, the history of whom is called this effulgent Mahabharata.*"

The next chapter gives up to verse 20 the glorious account of the King Santanu and the origin of the name Santanu is found in Chapter XCV, verse 45, that those who touched the hand of the king were restored to youth, feeling indescribable pleasure. The pious King Santanu retired to the forest after long enjoyment of all wordly pleasures in the company of women, wealth and prosperity. After this the important meeting of the son Bhisma, his mother Ganga and King Santanu is described in Chapter XXI, Adi Parva, in a novel manner, which speaks more of poetic imagination then actual credible historical fact. No reason whotsoever was given for the separation between the father and the son. The king could not recognise the son nor the mother at the meeting. The mother spoke of the son's education and qualifications and Santanu took the youth to his capital and installed him as his heir apparent to the throne. Then the alleged son not only gave up his title to the throne but promised to remain Brahmachari throughout his life, entitling him to the name of Bhisma and the boon of dying at will for the sake of his father's love affairs. In the same chapter the marriage of his father is described and the son is said to have performed

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* Professor M. N. Dutt's "English Translation of the Mahabharata Adi Parva", Chapter XCIX, page 145, verses 45—48.

the office of the go-between, which is an unheard of thing in any history of the world.

This chapter is the most conspicuous for containing as it does contradictory statements on the character of King Santanu. The river Ganges became shallow by the arrow of Bhisma, which attracted the notice of Santanu. Nothing can be made out of this. If Ganga is relieved of the curse as she disappeared in the previous chapter she can hardly be expected to come back again to deliver the son to the father in the manner she did. Then again Vasistha, the ideal example of forbearance, could not have been capable of cursing the Basus for their trivial omission in not making obeisance to him. He was famous for not having cursed or taken any action against the murderer of his own son Sakti. Bhisma is described as a great invincible warrior who learnt arms from Parasurama and defeated him in a famous fight described in the Mahabharata. But this cannot be so. Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, already curbed the powers of Parasurama at the time of breaking the bow of Siva, described in the Ramayana and Purana. Parasurama ceased to be the teacher or wielder of arms and he was banished from India proper after his sacrifice by Kasyapa, the priest of the Bharata kings.

"Having made the Earth shorn of Kshatriyas for twenty-one times, the powerful Bhargava, at the completion of a horse sacrifice, gave away the Earth as sacrificial present to Kasyapa. For preserving the residence of the Kshatriyas, Kasyapa, O King, pointing with his hand that still held the sacrificial ladle, said these words, —O great sage, go to the shores of the southern Ocean. You should not, O Rama, live within my kingdom. At these words, Ocean all on a sudden made for Jamadagni's son, on his other shore, a region called Surparaka. Kasyapa also, O king, having accepted the Earth in gift, made a present of it to the Brahmanas, and entered into the woods*".

Vasistha or Bhrigu were the usurpers of the post of the priesthood of the Kasyapa family to which Narada belonged. A Kasayapa descendant was coming to bring to life king Parikshita, but he was won over by the Naga King (Astika Parva). There is the Aila-Kasyap discourse in the Shanti Parva, which speaks for itself. In the Mahabharata, Bhisma was found to be a follower of the Narayana Krishna cult, but he is not conspicuously mentioned in the Srimad-Bhagabata Purana, where Bidura, the Pandavas and Kunti were all mentioned as renowned followers of that cult. What is more, even Durjodhana was mentioned as a background for good character. This proves that the introduction of Bhisma into the Mahabharata was of a much later date.

Bhisma is not an historical character, nor is he connected with the mythology of India. He is a romantic character, approaching divi-

* English Translation of the Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter L, page 69, verses 63—67.

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nity, introduced in the same way as many Greek Epic characters were introduced after the Indian fashion. Bhisma's only greatness lies in his mission for the marriage of his alleged father Santanu by his vow of sacrifice and nothing else—a fact quite unnatural and against the true character of King Santanu. No sensible father would stoop to such a level, and it is inconceivable that a son should be so feared when he had not yet ascended the throne and the father, who wanted to marry the girl of a Dasa King, was in possession of the throne and power.

The real meaning of the boon of dying at will connected with Bhisma may be explained. The man whose inclinations are not suited to his age feels the full burden of his years and dies at will. The man who kept quiet at the dice play and would not answer the questions put to him by Draupadi cannot be believed to have been fit to give lectures on political history, philosophy, religion and emancipation. There is a Hindi Mahabharata by Soubal Singh Chowana where the question was dramatically and tauntingly raised by Draupadi. Besides, as a positive proof of noble birth, Bhisma's instinct of honour should have revolted at the sight of such a dastardly act as the dragging of Draupadi in the public Dice Hall, for she was no other than the universally respected wife of the ideal king and elder cousin of Durjodhana. The learned annotator Nilkantha's views are clear on the point.

The war sections, including Bhisma Parva, were not important as recording the war tactics of great geniuses and the truth of events or the valour of the contending heroes of the field, but prove to the world that things are not what they seem to be in relation to virtue and vice. When the senior relatives and preceptors support an unjust cause and aggressors in their attempt to rob the lawful owners then there is no sin or shame in killing such men. This is clearly shown in the account of King Dandi, where the gods headed by Sri Krishna fought against the Kurus and the Pandavas and were defeated by them. This is a Pouranic account, but it had an Epic connection. This speaks of Bhisma's greatness, for he gave shelter to King Dandi when no one else dared do so. This is the true test of noble birth.

There is a reference to one King Danda in the Uttarakanda Ramayana (Cantos 93 and 94) as having outraged the modesty of Araja, the daughter of Bhrigu. The king and his kingdom were destroyed by the curse of the sage. The Apsara Urbasi, who was cursed and assumed the form of a mare, was in the possession of King Dandi. Sri Krishna called upon the king to surrender her to him, which he refused to do, and that was the cause of the fight between Devas and the Kurus Pandavas.

Bhisma was not living with his father when he was introduced by the Ganga, whom Santanu could not recognise as his wife or the mother of the child. If Bhisma was really living at the Kuru Court he must have been found on the Ganges bank as a stray, unclaimed child like Drona and Kripa, reared up by King Santanu, and was in no way connected with the Kuru race. If this was so, the general public would not have annually offered him oblation at the tarpan ceremony—like those who were childless—at the time of doing it to their own forefathers.

The Hindu shrines in India were connected with past mythological and historical characters, but no trace is found of Bhisma anywhere in India, which makes one think Bhisma was a fictitious being. The historical elements in the Mahabharata can only be traced if characters like Bhisma are first discriminated against and eliminated. It will be seen that nothing is said about the mysterious origin of the sons of Pandu. Had there really been anything like that which found a place in the dramatic Mahabharata of the rhapsodists, then it would not have been overlooked by Durjodhana, his father and his friends at the time of consideration of the claim of the sons of the Pandu to the half of the kingdom. Veteran politicians like Dhritarastra, who was described as being blind to his own faults and a severe censor of other's acts, would not have failed to make capital use of the question of the mysterious births of the sons of Pandu.

It is one thing to discover a truth, but very different to make others see it. All discoveries of truth were laughed at in the beginning. The ancient history of the Aryan race cannot be taught by the Epic unless one has fully learnt, marked and digested the three phases of the light the Epic sheds, as a mythological history, romance, and a drama. Historical facts when dramatised tell upon the imagination of the people better than mere fiction or romance. It is for this reason that historical facts have got to be ascertained first and romance and fiction should be exposed and their purpose told. The three main branches of learning are history, science and art. The first comprehends genuine records of the past, the second examines their truth from knowledge of the characters, inclinations and inferences therefrom, while the third includes all that is beautiful, charming and graceful in metre, language sound, colour, and object to present to human perception what is perfect. The Epic assumes that state, but in process of time is diverted by wrong handling to satisfy a vitiated taste, and has deteriorated to its present state.

It has been shown from the text of the Mahabharata what were the family history of the Kurus, the claims of the Pandavas and the conduct

of Durjodhana. Now it remains to be shown why, like a coward, Yudhisthira and his brothers suffered the indignities said to have been inflicted on Draupadi, the heroine of the dramatic Epic Mahabharata. Such a thing did not happen in the historic Epic, for Bhisma was a romantic personage and the table of contents does not mention anything about him or Draupadi. The verse in the Adi Parva and the table of contents clearly state that, solicited by Janmejoya and the thousand Brahmanas, Vyasa taught the Mahabharata to his disciple Vaisampayana, who recited the Bharata at the interval of the sacrifice where Vyasa fully described the glory of the Kuru race, the virtue of Gandhari, constancy of Kunti, goodness of the Pandavas, wisdom of Bidura, with the greatness of Krishna against the evil conduct of the sons of Dhritarastra. It was composed of 24000 verses, exclusive of episodes, which is the real Bharata. (*Vide* 97—101 Slokas, Chapter I, Adi Parva).

The next list of heroes of the contending parties in the dramatic Mahabharata are as follows:—The tree of virtue and religion is Yudisthira, Arjuna its trunk, Bhima its branches, the two sons of Madri its flowers and fruit, and the very roots are Krishna, Brahma (sacrifice) and Brahmanas, whereas Durjodhana is the tree of passion, Karna its trunk, Sakuni its branches, Dussasana its fruit and flowers and its roots Dhritarastra (*Vide* 108-9 Slokas, Adi Parva, Chapter I). There is no mention whatsoever of Bhisma and Drona or Salya in these important verses, nor is any mention made there of the great heroine Draupadi.

The mention of the wailings of Dhritarastra in the table of contents is not only out of place and an anachronism, but is contradictory to the body of the Mahabharata. The table of contents before the wailings of Dhritarastra gives the cause of the dice play and makes no mention of the dragging of Draupadi.

There is no justification whatsoever for putting in another table of contents the wailings of Dhritarastra, which by their language and style are very modern and an interpolation of the worst type. The translation of the verse where the dice play with its cause is referred to in the table of contents is:—

"After killing Jarasandaha, proud of his prowess through the wise counsel of Krishna and by the prowess of Bhima and Arjuna, Yudhisthira acquired the right to perform the Rajsuya, which abounded in provisions and offerings and was full of transcendent merits. Durjodhana came to this sacrifice. When he saw on all sides the great wealth of the Pandavas,—the offerings, the precious stones, gold and jewels, elephants and horses; valuable textures, garments and mantles; shawls and furs, carpets made of the skin of the Rankava,—he was filled with envy, and became very angry. When he saw the hall of assembly, beautifully constructed by Moyo after the celestial court, he became exceedingly sorry. (To chagrin him more) when he was confused at certain architectural deceptions, Bhisma sneered at him, before Vasudeva,

saying he was of low birth. It was represented to Dhritarastra that his son, though he was partaking of various objects of enjoyment and valuable things, was becoming pale, lean and meagre. Out of affection for him the blind king gave his son permission to play at dice (with the Pandavas). When Krishna came to know this, he became very angry. And being displeased, he did nothing to stop the dispute, but overlooked the fatal game and other horrible unjust deeds that were the result of it.* "

Now the incidents just referred to in the above quotation are described in Shanti Parva, Chapter CXXIV and in the next chapter. Yudhisthira openly said that he was disappointed, as he thought Durjodhana would not fight but would give him half the kingdom. This is the history of the claim and demand of Yudhisthira, but such was not the case in the demand of the Pancha-Grama (five villages), which is not referred to anywhere in the table of contents. It has both a metaphysical and ironical meaning, this challenge by Krishna at the Kuru Court. In Daksha Samhita, 7th Chapter, Slokas 17-18, is explained the meaning of Pancha-Grama, with the definition of an unconquerable hero. It would be a sad spectacle if Yudhisthira descended to such a low level as to be satisfied with the five villages which was all Dhritarastra wanted to give the Pandavas after the first dice play. It will not be out of place here to point out that the table of contents nowhere refers to the second dice play, which is more than dramatic.

The annotator Nilkantha has explained the object of writing Birata Parva and how it formed part of the Mahabharata. This bears out what is said in the Daksha Samhita, already referred to, about Pancha-Grama. The hero of the Indian Epic of the metaphysical world was Yudhisthira; on whose behalf Sri Krishna, the ideal conception of godhead, was represented as trying either to conclude an honourable peace. or to challenge the enemy in a way which would create terror in their minds. It was for this reason the word Pancha-Grama, which Dhritarastra offered and the Pandavas refused, was referred to as an irony or chastisement by Sri Krishna that the Pandavas were then in quite an altered position and had discovered themselves as heroes after Birata Parva to convey to them what is the real meaning of an unconquerable hero as referred to before in Daksha Samhita.

The institutes of Daksha explained:—Attachment, illusion, distraction, shame, apprehension should be overcome by all means, and he who succeeds with ancillary attributes of mind and heart to discover the soul of man, is an unconquerable hero. He is not like a man who acquired forcibly the kingdoms of others and wanted to be styled a hero. What the institutes of Daksha explain and the annotator Nilkantha confirms, is that such a challenge was worthy of the hero, Yudhisthira, after

*Adi Parva, Mahabharata, Chapter I. Slokas 128—137.

disclosing himself at the end of the promised time of exile passed in Birata Parva. The annotator has shown that the Udyoga Parva of the Mahabharata is universally held by wise-men to be the best of all the Parvas, as it taught that God takes the side of the just who, though quite capable of taking steps against the wrongs done by their enemies, do not do so to satisfy the enemy's desire and to fulfil the promise imposed upon them by wicked dice play.

Dice play was in vogue from Vedic times; King Nala lost his kingdom through it, but there was no mention of staking his wife Damayanti. The staking of a wife was never heard of at any time in any civilised or uncivilised country of the world. This was only an act of the bard to create a stirring dramatic effect on the audience and there is no historic truth behind it. The Epic Mahabharata was originally built upon a historical background, but was at last converted into an allegory of metaphysics. These historical personages are used as glorious examples to convert the general public into admirers and to convey to them the difficult implications of the spiritual and philosophical development of mind and soul. This is the real aim of the current Mahabharata from the invocation Sloka to the vast enlargement in the various divisions of the great Epic.

It will be interesting to mention here that in the Epic Ramayana there was no dice play and the exile of Rama took place on account of his wicked step-mother. The boon promised to the Queen Kakeyi could easily have been disregarded as the installation ceremony of Rama was announced before the asking of the boon, but Rama did not like to place his father in an awkward position. This was another instance of a son gladly undertaking the hardship of exile for the sake of his father's promise.

A life of exile in the woods is a sort of education to win the laurel of fame by putting into practice valour and skill at arms. The annotator Nilkantha has said so in his note. It is clearly mentioned that Yudhisthira visited the shrines and came across distinguished sages and heard from them experiences and lessons on how to become successful in life. The incident of the dragging of Draupadi at the dice play and the Durbasa incident in the Bana Parva were to show how devotion to God could foil the wicked in their attempts and nothing else. The discourse between Yudhisthira and Draupadi shows the spiritual culture of the couple.

In Bana Parva the good and evil companions of the company were discussed and in the Saunaka and Yudhisthira discourse the talk centred round the praise of Yogi over interested religion and virtue.

In Bhisma Parva it was shown that this Parva was merely made to show to this world the glory and power of an attached devotee like Bhisma, where Sri Krishna had to break his own promise in order that his devotee's words might come true, and it has no historical background whatsoever. In this Parva, Gita was included, which is strange, standing as it does after the queer position of Arjuna's advising Yudhisthira not to be afraid of Bhisma in Chapter XXI.

"O mighty-armed hero, O Dhananjaya, how shall we be able to fight with the Dhritarashtra's sons' army when the grandfather himself commands it. Immovable and impenetrable is this Vyuha, formed according to the rules of the Shastras, by that chastiser of foes, Bhisma, of unfading glory. O chastiser of foes, we are doubtful of success. How can victory be ours in the face of this (Kuru) army?

"O king, that chastiser of foes, Arjuna, thus spoke of your army to the son of Pritha, Yudhisthira, who was in great grief. O king, hear how a small number of men, endued with every quality, can defeat a large army. O king, you are without malice, I shall therefore tell you of the means. The Rishi Narada as well as Bhisma and Drona know it. In the days of yore, at the battle between the celestials and the Danavas, the Grandfather himself said (the following) to Indra and the other celestials. 'They that are desirous of victory do not so much conquer by might and prowess as by truth, compassion, piety and virtue. Therefore, knowing the difference between piety and impiety and understanding what is meant by covetousness and having recourse to only exertion, fight without any arrogance, for victory is certain to be there, where righteousness is' O king, for this reason, know that victory is certain to be ours in this battle. Narada said, 'Victory is certainly there, where Sri Krishna is.' Victory is inherent to Sri Krishna; it follows Madheva (Krishna); victory is one of his attributes, so is humility Govinda (Sri Krishna) possesses might which is infinite, even in the midst of countless foes. He is without and beyond all pains. He is the most eternal Purusha. Victory is certainly there where Krishna is.' (Bhisma Parva. Chapter XXI, verses 3—14).

This is what Arjuna reads to Yudhisthira in the Mahabharata, and there is another version in Sanjoya's reading of the lecture of Sri Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield to cry down the heroism of the hero Arjuna and to speak in very high terms of the Kuru warriors, all killed by the God himself. Nor is this all Sri Krishna told Arjuna to worship Durga and to fight Bhisma in the next chapter. All these speak of separate editions of the Mahabharata in different times.

The Indian Epic was first conceived and the Greeks copied it, which the learned Professor Max Muller admitted. Certain customs, manners, forms of gods and their worship, which were found to have been common among the Indians and Greeks and a striking resemblance between the Trojan War and the war of the Ramayana prove that Rome and Greece by their intercourse with India through trade and invasion, realised the greatness of Indian culture and adopted it in the best way they could. It is well known that the ancient Hindu religion never admitted foreigners within it, and even now, it is patent even to casual ob ervers.

In the Indian Epics no individual names are traced for their authorships, but they contain a colossal mass of didactic, lyrical and dramatic material full of mythological allusions and references representing the luxuriant growth of several ages. They betray the taste of pedantic editors and reciters to win applause from the learned as well as the illiterate audiences whom they addressed. They must, therefore, contain all kinds of things to suit the taste of different people. This is not a fancifull imagining without anything to bear it out. The constitution of public sacrifices with the different sorts of addresses for different people will serve to convince every reasonable man.

The current Epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata do not represent the age of Vyasa and Valmiki but a much later date. They were more artistic in design, ornate and dramatic in composition, with such divisions as made admission of extemporaneous foreign matter within them easy. They cannot, however, be compared with any other Epics of the world. The subsequent development in the Epics is distinguished with the age of advancing civilisation. All these are quite different from Western ideas and there is no trace of immigration into India from the West from the early days up to the Epic period.

The reciters of the Hindu Epics introduced Karna as their hero, greater than the Kshatriya Arjuna, making connection with the Royal family and disgracing it at the same time with the absurd story of conceiving a child when a mere girl not having attained the age of puberty. They were not satisfied with this. They made Karna such a great hero that Sri Krishna stooped so low as to offer him the kingdom, and Karna could not be bought off even by such an offer. He was always anxious to fight Arjuna. Poor men did not see that Karna was defeated several times before by Arjuna, at the Swayambara of Draupadi and at the fight on behalf of King Birata to recover his cows. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana were converted into the panegyric of the distinct lines of kings Solar and Lunar by the Sutas for selfish motives. Karna was made a hero of the Sutas.

"What harsh words, I said to the sons of Pandu, O Krishna, were for the gratification of the son of Dhritarastra and I am now struck with remorse for that misdeed

"When you will see me, O Krishna, slain by Savyasachi, then will the Punaschiti (the second part of the ceremonies) commence, O Janardana.

"When the sons of Pandu will drink the blood of Dussashana, repeatedly making loud roars, then will the drinking of the Soma juice of the sacrifice have been finished.

"When Drona and Bhisma will be overthrown by the two Princes of Panchala, then will the ceremonies connected with the sacrifice of the son of Dhritarastra be brought to an end, O Janardana.

"When Bhimasena of great strength will be the slayer of Durjodhana then will the ceremonies be finished.

"When the daughters-in-law and the grand daughters-in-law (wives of grandsons) of Dhritarashtra will assemble together, being deprived of their protectors, their sons and their husbands. O Keshava, weeping loudly with Gandhari in the field of battle frequented by dogs and vultures and other carnivorous animals then will the final bath in connection with the sacrifice have taken place, O Janardana.

"Do not let these best of the Kshatriyas, who are old in learning, and old in age meet with a useless death on account of your doings, O slayer of Madhu.

"The entire race of Kshatriyas will meet with death by weapons in Kurukshettra, the holiest spot in all the worlds, O Keshava. O you of lotus-eyes, manage things in such a way in this case that we may gain our end—that united together the Kshatriyas go to Heaven, O you of the Vrishni race.

"So long as mountains and lakes will exist, O Janardana, so long will the fame of this event last—that is, for ever.

"The Brahmanas will tell the world of the great battle of Mahabharata. The wealth of Kshatriyas, O you of Vrishni race, is what they win in the field of battle.

"Bring here the son of Kunti for me to fight. O Keshava, for ever keeping this conversation secret. O Chastiser of enemies."*

The Greeks were great admirers of India and followed Indians in every respect. Solan ordered first that the rhapsodists should keep closely to the traditional text of the poem at their public recitals and Pisitratus appointed a committee of several poets to collect the scattered lays and revise the text found in extant copies or in the oral traditions of the rhapsodists. Thus, in course of time, the original texts underwent many arbitrary alterations at their hands, chiefly to suit the tastes of the different ages in order to make the recital popular and lucrative. The original compositions of Vyasa and Valmiki were disfigured, lost, and altered, and in this way the Indian Epics grew in size incongruous and out of order both in sequence of time and reasoning.

The Greek Epic writer of note belonged to 640 B. C. and it is held that elegaic and iambic poetry like the Epic, owed its origin to Ionian Colonies in Asia Minor. Poetry and prose first developed among the Ionians in the era of seven sages in the beginning of the sixth century B. C. Aesop published his fables and Pherecydes of Syros composed philosophical prose writing. In the fifth century B. C. the philosophy of the Ionian School was actually founded and Pythagoras, who established his philosophy in Magna Graccia, died in 504 B. C. Herodotus, the father of history, and Hippocrates, the founder of medical science, died in 424 B. C. and 377 B. C., respectively. Athens won the leading position from the time of Socrates, who died in 399 B. C. It is well-known that the early Greek Chronicler, Hecataur, travelled widely in Europe, Asia and Egypt and he was born in 550 B. C. He gave his countrymen good counsel and succeeded in

* The Mabh. Udyoga Parva, Chapter CXLI, verses 43—57.

obtaining some alleviation of the hard measures adopted by the Persians at the time of the Ionian revolt.

The great resemblance of the mere sequence of things in the progress of civilisation between Grecian and Indian histories is often mistaken as meaning that one was copied from the other, but the historian of man does not find any such thing between the two in the habits, manners and customs of the Hindus. There was no trace of Hatairism or of promiscuous relationship between the sexes. The family and not the tribe was the unit of society. The father or the preceptor was the head of the family or the maker of the spiritual life in the re-birth of a Gotra. The families were not reckoned on the mothers' sides and inheritance did not descend by the female line.

The Chronicle of Kish gives the origin of the famous Sargon I, of Akkad, in the same way as that of Suta Karna, who was held to be the crowned King of Anga by Durjodhana.

"According to the Chronicle of Kish, the next ruler of Sumer and Akkad after Lugal-zaggisi was the famous Sargon I. It would appear that he was an adventurer or usurper, and that he owed his throne indirectly to Lugal-zaggisi, who had dethroned the ruler of Akkad. Later traditions, which have been partly confirmed by contemporary inscriptions, agree that Sargon was of humble birth. In the previous chapter reference was made to the Tammuz-like myth attached to his memory. His mother was a vestal virgin dedicated to the sun god, Shamash, and his father an unknown stranger from the mountains—a suggestion of immediate Semitic affinities. Perhaps Sargon owed his rise to power to the assistance received by bands of settlers from the land of the Amorites, which Lugal-zaggisi had invaded. According to the legend, Sargon's birth was concealed. He was placed in a vessel which was committed to the river. Brought up by a commoner, he lived in obscurity until the Semitic goddess, Ishtar, gave him her aid. A similar myth was attached in India to the memory of Karna, the Hector of that great Sanskrit Epic the Mahabharata.*"

The close similarity between the legend of Suta Karna of the Mahabharata, and the story of king Sargon is significant and suggestive of extraneous influence. In the table of contents of the first edition of the Mahabharata Karna's name is not mentioned, and it is likely that the fame of King Saigon having reached India, the story of Sargon was later on foisted upon the Mahabharata in the guise of the mythical Karna. Further, Sargon is a Jewish name and it might have been that Jews were at first inhabitants of India, and subsequently spread to all parts of the world for trade. The Sutas and Sargons might be identical. The Sutas were the chroniclers of the kings and when, by the extirpation of the kings (Kshatriyas) by Parasurama, the occupation of the Sutas in India was gone, they betook themselves for trade to foreign countries and came to be designated Jews, many of whose

* Professor Donald A. Mackenzie's "Myths of Babylonia and Assyria,", pages 125-126.

customs and religious practices closely resemble those of the ancient Hindus, *e.g.*, the custom of offering oblations to the departed ancestors, that of observing general mourning and uncleanness for one year after death of parents, that of performing the Holi festival, that of burning a lamp for some days in the room where a death occurs, and so on.

Sutas meant bards, who originally lived in Bengal where the Puranas were caste. Professor Pargiter is of the same opinion:—

"The Suta mentioned here is not the caste that was described as the off spring of a Kshatriya father and Brahman mother; that was a later application of the term. This Suta was a bard, like the Magadha, and the origin of both is placed in the time of a primeval king Prthu, son of Vena. It is explained by a fable, which says the first Suta and Magadha came into existence at his sacrifice, and gives a fanciful explanation of the names. What is noteworthy is that the story says Prthu assigned the Anupa (or Suta) country to the Sutas and Magadha to the Magadhas; and this discloses that the Magadhas were really inhabitants of Magadha and the Sutas inhabitants of the Anupa country which appears to mean Bengal here, or of the Suta country, the district east of Magadha.* ...... The Sutas had from remote times preserved the genealogies of gods, rishis and kings, and traditions and ballads about celebrated men, that is, exactly the material—tales, songs and ancient lore—out of which the Purana was constructed. Whether or not Vyasa composed the original Purana or superintended its compilation, is immaterial for the present purpose. What is important is that there was abundant tradition of various kinds, which could and wou'd naturally have been used in its construction, and of the very kinds that went to its construction. The ancient tales were topics of real interest to kings, people and rishis, as both the Epics and the Puranas, by their very structure proclaim, and they were also matters to which men of intelligence gave their attention. Allusions in the Veda itself show the same. It would be quite natural that, after the religious hymns were formed into the Veda, the ancient secular tales and lore should have been collected in a Purana. What the next development of the Purana was is described in the Brahmanda and Vayu, and similarly though less fully in the Vishnu. Romaharsana made that Purana Samhita into six versions and taught them to his six disciples, Atreya Sumati, Kasyapa Kartavrana, Bharadvaja Agnivarcas, Vasistha Mitrayu, Savarni and Samsapayana, and made three separate Samhitas, which were called by their names. Romaharsana's Samhita and those three were the 'root-compositions' (Mulasamhita). They consisted of four divisions (pada) and were to the same effect but differed in their diction. All except Samsapayana's contained 4000 verses. Those versions do not exist now; still some of those persons, besides Romaharsana, appear as inquirers or narrators in some of the Puranas and also in the Mahabharata."†

The Vayu, Brahmanda and Vishnu Puranas say:—

"Krsna Dvaipayana divided the single Veda into four and arranged them, and so was called Vyasa. He entrusted them to his four disciples, one to each, namely Paila, Vaisampayana, Jaimini and Samantu. Then with tales, anecdotes, songs and lore that had come down from the ages he compiled a Purana, and taught it and the Itihasa to his fifth disciple, the Suta Romaharsana or Lomaharsana."‡

There is a very close connection between the Drama and the Veda, with its religion and worship. Bharata, an old sage, the father of the

*Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Historical Tradition," page 16.

† Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Historical Tradition," pages 22-23.

‡ Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Historical Tradition," page 21.

Ancient Indian Natyacastra, occupies a place in the growth of dramatic theory analogous to that of Panini in Vedic Grammar. Drama was developed in an age of advanced, civilised and cultured society, able to understand the implications of the plays. Epic literature discloses a new form of theme designed to represent the old traditions in vivid pictures of social, moral and spiritual giants, who could represent the ideals of the time against their despised rivals. It is said Brahma first conceived the idea of transferring to earth the celestial instructions of the Vedas in such a way as to be interesting and pleasing entertainment for the general public irrespective of caste, creed or colour, so that the country and the nation as a whole might be educated, benefitted and entrusted with the propagation of a peaceful race and a powerful religion.

Drama was first begun on a special occasion—the victory over the Asuras by the Devas, headed by Indra. Visvakarma, the great architect of heaven, built a stage and the sage Bharata and the divine nymph Urvasi sought the help of the great God Siva, goddess Parbati and their son, Ganesh, patron of literature and remover of obstacles. Siva contributed to it the "Tandava" dance, Parbati the dramatic movements of face and body called Lasya, and Vishnu took the active parts of four dramatic styles, so very essential for the affectiveness of the play. Ganesh was the reviser of Vyasa's composition of the Bharata Samhita of 8800 verses. This is what is recorded in the table of contents of the Mahabharata.

In Rama's case, the influence of the Epic on the Drama seems to have been in its full development.* The origin of the Drama and dramatic performance are connected with the Vedic performances and hymns and the victory of the Devas over the Asuras. The essential aim of Bharata's drama was to secure the worship of the Devas, not by hymns—very difficult and costly affairs—in the sacrifices, but by actual personifications of the great fight between Britta and Indra, when Indra won and seized the banner of Jarpara, a reed of five knots painted white, blue, black, yellow, red and a mixture of hues. The people joining the entertainment paid reverence to Indra's banner and to the world guardians (Dikpals).†

The table of contents of the Epic clearly says that the Bharata Samhita begins either with the account of King Uparichara or with the Astik

*Bhababhuti's Uttaramcharita is well appreciated by Eastern and Western scholars and his debt to the Epic is acknowledged.

†The Mahabarata of Vyasa actually begins with the Indra and Narayana worship by Uparichara Basuhoma and praise to the Dikpalas by Vyasa in the hymn of Sabitri (*Vide* Annusasana Parva, 150 Chapter).

Parva or with Sambhab Parva. The beginning of King Uparichara is in the Adi Parva, Chapter LXIII, confirmed in the Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXXXVIII. The Yajnavalkya edition of the Mahabharata is referred to in Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXIX, which begins with Astik Parva, and the Narayana edition begins with Savyambhuba Manu with the Sambhab Parva, and the Vaisampayan edition begins in the Adi Parva, Chapter LX, which also begins with King Uparichara from Chapter LXIII, Adi Parva.

EPIC HISTORY AND CIVILISATION.

The earliest records of the Indo-Aryans can only be found in the Vedas, but for which very little would have been known of that age, and of the ancient Aryans. This has been admitted by all the learned men of the world. The Rig Veda is held to be the oldest, and the trunk from which all the Vedas grew or were divided.

India was the birthplace of the Vedas and the first home of civilisation and religion. The language in which the Vedas were written and sung was abstruse and terse, if not mystic. It required a full twelve years' training to enable students to understand and read them properly.

The royal sacrifices became useful institutions of vocational training in which students learnt the Vedas. In Vedic sacrifices large numbers of animals were sacrificed and the great sages Vasistha and Kapila were the first protestants who stood against the inhumanity of such sacrifices and sternly set their faces against them. The Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata were first conceived by the great sages to carry on the Vedic sacrifices, replacing animal sacrifices with great concentration of mind to realise the true essence of the Vedic religion. Sacrifices were soon impressed with the character of educational institutions of great public utility, and were adjuncts to the advancement of civilisation and the material prosperity of the country.

In the long term sacrifices the whole people of a country and adjacent places were entertained with the contents of the Indian Epics, which open with the plans of God's wisdom in creation, His unselfish love and due provisions of mercy to created beings. The ardour of natural affection shines forth in the material world in mother and child. The infant unmasks the true spirit of love in the bosom of his family, and in strangers without any fear of interruption or intrusion. The home, where the infant grows, becomes the centre of attraction. India was such a home of the Aryans.

By their great sacrifices they reclaimed forests, extended human habitation over uninhabitable regions by drawing together a large concourse of people to the scene of the sacrifices, by excavating rivers, by draining away filth and refuse either by using them as fuel, or throwing them in the water, or covering them with earth as manure for cultivation, by utilising the large number of cattle in ploughing the fields and drawing water from wells, instead of destroying them in the burning flames

of the sacrifical fire and, last though not least, the young students, impressed with the majestic sacrifices, learnt with avidity the great recitations of Vedic formulas and ceremonials from the expert performers from day to day.

The great advancement of the present age in knowledge makes it possible to discover the growth of civilisation in India from the Vedic sacrifices, their great ministers and the kings who performed them. There is no pleasure so charming and transporting as to catch the first glimpse of the spot where the first great creation of God took place. The scientific nations of the world believe in the deluge of the world, and the Hindus do the same. The succession of time is only a stream leading to Eternity and, what reason leads one to conclude from enquiries, researches and experiments properly conducted, becomes scientific truth.

There are evidences of Nature in the domain of research. Nature has made one world and Art another, but they are not at variance. Art is, after all, nothing but the perfection of Nature. The heart is moved equally by Nature and Art. The deductions of reason are indeed gratifying to the intellect in its endeavours to comprehend the manner in which everything was first made and displayed, and the order in which the various objects of creation, *viz.*, ocean, mountain, desert, river, lake, waterfall, or water, earth, wind, fire and sky, came into being. There is nothing so charming as the knowledge of literature which makes one realise the infinity and majesticity of the author of Nature. Nature is the kindliest mother, supplying every creature, insect and plant with what is indispensably necessary for the support of life.

It is not the Vedas but the spirit of God which rescued them from the obscurity of ignorance and saved them from the hands of the Asuras by the revelation of the guardian angel of Nature in the hurling of thunder, burning of wood with wild fire, blowing the peaks of mountains to earth, or bringing out burning lava from the bed of the earth. Art has nothing to do with all these, and science failed to discover many things about them. Nature's voice was reflected in the emotional instinct of man, in the Vedic hymn makers by their meek submission of solemn and sincere love, trying to propitiate the supernatural or superhuman powers.

In Epic literature the first attempt was made to decipher the plan and field of the growth of civilisation and its spread. The fall of kings, the rage of nations and the crash of states could not be the theme of such early literature of India. There is a great pleasure in the effort and satisfaction will always increase with its success, with which name, of 'Jaya,' or success, the Epics of India are titled and named.

The spiritual history of the great Epic is inter-related with the material progress of India. Sacrifices served the purpose of great educational, agricultural, irrigation and reclamation works—intitutions of very great importance for the growth of the country and the nation—through the instrumentality of the ancient sages. This ultimately gave rise to a sort of hagiarchy in India. There are some great examples of human art in the world which have received the name of Wonders of the World.* The famous Pyramid, the quarry of Egypt, is one of them. India is the epitome of the world. The Indian Epics describe giants and prodigies of a nation whose deeds can be regarded as Wonders of the World.

Sixty thousand subjects of King Sagar worked like his obedient and devoted children in excavating the sea south of Bengal, and fathered the name of the sea as "Sagara" in Sanskrit, the mother of all languages. The island Sagara at the meeting place of the Ganges and the sea, where the famous sage Kapila released the humble labourers from the toils of earthly life, became a sacred shrine. It was this hagiarchy which compelled Sagara's descendant Bhagiratha to undertake very extensive excavation, in spite of the great protests of the royal Vedic sage Jahuhu, only to propitiate the greatest of all sages Kapila by joining the Ganges with the sea near Kapila's hermitage in Bengal to redeem the great work of Sagara's children over a great length of time.

The halbertier Brahmin warrior Parasurama helped very greatly by force of arms and skill to establish this hagiarchy in India. He too, like Bhagirata, had widened and extended the river Brahmaputra. His crusades against the Kshatriyas drove many Kshatriya kings, queens and princes to take refuge on the banks of the Ganges in Bengal. Saptagrama was the famous place of the seven sages near the well-known shrine of Tribeni, where the three rivers Ganges, Jumna and Saraswati meet. Naturally these Kshatriya princes and kings bore a deep resentment against this hagiarchy, and were very reluctant to be subservient to the priestly behests and to performances of Vedic sacrifices. The priestly law-givers like Manu, in retaliation, branded them with inferiority and banned Bengal as a place outside Aryabarta. The kings of Bengal fought against the Pandavas and it is said to be a place "shunned by the Pandavas".

The origin of the name of Bengal is said to have been connected with the human art of constructing an embankment wall around it to prevent its being washed away by flood.* Banga was the name of the king of that place and "al" meant a boundary ridge. The formation

* Ayeni Akbari.

Kapila typifies the Bengal school of nonconformists and dissenters rom the old school of animal sacrifices. This the great Epic describes when Kapila protested against the animal sacrifice of King Nahusa. Presumption and self-sufficiency are sobered down by the acquisition of useful knowledge. This the great Epics demonstrate in the fall of Parasurama and Nahusa, and they have been the buoys in the vast ocean of life to warn people of the danger. In the protestantism against the old system of sacrifice it is only natural that the remodelling and recasting occurred in the place of its original birth and growth. Kapila took the first initiative and he represented Bengal.

Every intelligent and cultured man has a right to be heard, but when the froth of the brain becomes the venom of the heart, it becomes prejudice. The malignant influences produced by prejudices and party-spirit of opposing ranks end in exhaustion of the quivers of irony, sarcasm and abuse of the contending parties. The Indian Epics, of a later age, demonstrate it and serve as great light-houses of warning to posterity. The institution of Vedic sacrifices, with the march of the times, had passed through various vicissitudes. They assumed gigantic proportions Knowing that superstition is the religion of ha'it, the ancient sages and illustrious kings connected everything with a hidden significance and with accrual of religious merit or demerit for their observance or transgression. The great peculiarity of the Indo-Aryan civilisation in India and its gradual development and advance has been that it ensured the observance and continuance of all works of public good or utility by giving them a religious character and sanction. It was when the rage and the rancour of partisanship descended to such a low level of bitter acrimony as to wound personalities that the disputants had no option left but to leave home and go to the battlefield to decide their quarrel through arms and skill. It was thus that the whole theme of the great Epics became at last converted into the great religious war with Sri Krishna at its back.

Revolution takes place with a sudden impulse given to the mind, without allowing knowledge time to ripen into principle. This was the state of India when the great battle of Kurukshettra took place. The field was like a vast ocean in a tempest, where human beings big or small, like ships, drifted away from their anchors of reason and became the sport of circumstances and foundered in the deep bed of the ocean of time. It is indeed the most pitiable sight and illustrates to the world the great lesson that passions are the signs of the soul and the children of Nature. To be without them is worse than birds and beasts, and every man should remember that the Omnipotent Father blessed

men and women with reason and conscience to use the passions by keeping them under control.

The discovery of the skeleton of a man of mighty stature like that of Bhima Kartabiryarjun, demon-like Kumbhakarna or Ravana, may give rise to a conclusion that men in ancient times were giants, but it finds very little credence in the present age. Many of the sports and pastimes, food and drink, habit and custom of the ancients might have been responsible for such wonderful growths. The bones show that vultures did not fall upon them or the earth could not decompose them as they were sacred. There are deep meanings to the unusual stories of the birth of the Epic heroes, to their names as well as their pictures as giants of strength and intellect. Bichitravirya was the name of the father of Dhritarastra, Pandu and Bidura. The name Bichitravirya itself was selected to imply more the marked diversity of his progeny than anything else. It is said that the mother of Dhritarastra, at the sight of the procreator sage, closed her eyes out of vanity and hatred and so the issue became blind; that Pandu's mother could not bear the effulgence of the Brahmana sage and her issue became frightened and retired, and so the issue became yellow complexioned; that the slave girl was all reverence to the sage, so her issue Bidura became Brahmanical.

That Kunti's and Madri's relations with the gods above were fruitful and those with their human husband Pandu were not so, symbolise that the Pandavas were the issues of divine love and not of carnal passion. The picture of carnal love is depicted in the death of Pandu in the arms of Madri, and Madri ascending the funeral pyre of her dead husband not for religious practice, but to satisfy her unsatisfied love and passion in the next world as the great Epic describes. When man or woman creates wants by luxury and passion such deaths stare in the face those who indulge in them. The traditional pictures of social life in the heroic age and nothing else are reflected in these characters.

The civilisation of Ancient India is also reflected in the mythology of the Hindus as well as in their popular and well-known customs and manners. The first incarnation of God Vishnu was the fish, indicating that men in the earliest time lived by eating the most easily procurable food, *i.e.*, fish. The next incarnations of tortoise and boar indicate that with the progress of civilisation men betook themselves to these animal foods, which are seen in plenty in the rivers and jungles of Bengal. Besides, the idea found in the Rig Veda that man's soul goes to the tree and to water is still believed by the

Sonthals of Bengal. The rivers of the Punjab or the United Provinces are not like those of Bengal.

The well-known story of the churning of the sea and the rising of the goddess of prosperity, Lakshmi, is very significant. The worship of the goddess Lakshmi is connected with the corn-growing of Bengal. The Sanskrit word Arya and the incarnation of Vishnu Valaram are connected with the plough ("a"). The birth of the great Epic heroine Sita is also connected with it. From all these it is evident that the Aryans were agricultural people and it would naturally connect the Aryan habitation to a place on the plains near sea and river with rich fertile soil and abundance of water for irrigation and rain. The deity of prosperity, Lakshmi, is worshipped in every Hindu home periodically every year in Bengal only.

Bengal is famous for feeding one hundred thousand Brahmanas at Vedic Sradh ceremonies, as would appear from the records of the Calcutta High Court, and for spending millions of rupees for the performance of the funeral obsequies of parents. From the days of the most ancient civilisation, the most popular and sacred method of according honour and welcome to a guest has been by offering him water, etc., called *padya* and *arghya*, and that of offering blessing with corn and green grass. The origin of this custom would again point to a country which was rich in green verdure all the year round and in a superabundance of water and corn. There is no part of India which would answer the description better than Bengal.

The whole of India except the Punjab was known by the name of Gour in Bengal, and the Gour method of literary composition is mentioned in old Sanskrit literature. The Gour Brahmanas were engaged in the snake sacrifice of Janmejoya. The mythological mountains of Mandar, used as the spindle or the churning staff of the sea, is in old Bengal. In trade and commerce as well as in manufacture of celebrated goods which formed the articles of oversea trade with the outside world, Bengal stood foremost. From the earliest time Bengal was famous for building boats and sea-going vessels. European traders before the days of Alexander's expedition came in their vessels to Satgaon of Bengal. It was from Bengal that the first expedition to Ceylon and its conquest by Bijoy Sidha, son of King Singhabahu of Bengal, took place.

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata contain interesting relationship between the well-known kings like Dasaratha and Durjodhana as friends and allies. Bengal is closely connected with the political, historical and religious history of India.

There are good grounds for concluding that Bengal and adjacent parts was the seat of early civilisation in India. Arayalaya, the abode of Vishnu, is the name of Hurrial in the District of Rajshahy. Tnis was the commercial mart where the East India Company had an established factory for the purchase of silk and cotton goods. * Saugor Island is the most ancient shrine of Kapila, where the sons of King Sagara were cursed and destroyed and the custom of infanticide continued up to the time of the British occupation. † There is a mention of Ravana's falling into a swoon at meeting Kapila Deva in the Ramayana and there is an island of Rabnabad in the District of Backergunge and the Barisal gun is the famous sound whose cause has not as yet been discovered. Ravana was connected with the tradition of the great Siva at Baidyanath and the river Karmanasha. ‡ At Sahebgunge, in the District of Purneah, there is a Hindu temple dedicated to the gigantic Hanuman, devotee of Rama Chandra. § The king Janaka, the celebrated father of Sita, lived on the Tirhoot Tivabhucti, whose dialect is called Maithili and whose kingdom lay by the border or the Nepalese kingdom. The river Gunduck owes its origin to Tibet of Dhawala-giri mountain peak, where the Salgrama Silas are found, which are worshipped by the Hindus. A town in the Tirhoot district is called Pursaumah (Parasu Rama) 90 miles North-East of Patna. ¶

There is an island Vamani at the confluence of the Ganges and Brahmaputra ** as well as Isle of the Moon (Somadwipa) at the confluence commonly known as Sundeep Isle.†† There is a remarkable hot spring which is also called Seta Kund and the famous Siva Chandrasekhara in Chittagong. It is significant that Kookies are a stout, muscular people with flat nose, broad round face, small eyes, all hunters and warriors with bows, arrows, clubs, spears and dows under whose care Sita was left when Rama and Lakshmana went out in search of the golden stag and Ravana found the convenient opportunity to steal Sita. Sita Coundu at Chittagong is perhaps the spot where she was seized by force and transferred to a ship to carry her to Ceylon. It was by sea Sita was carried, which baffled Rama and Lakshmana to trace the culprit. The savage people felt aggrieved at Ravana's conduct and made common cause against the great tyrant Ravana to

* *Vide* Hamilton's "Geographical, Statistical, and Historical description of Hindoosthan", Volume I, page 199.

† Ibid p. 128.

‡ Ibid p. 134.

§ Ibid p. 238.

¶ Ibid p. 273.

** Ibid p. 176.

†† Ibid p. 175.

recover Sita. This can be the only cause of Rama's alliance with them and not what the poets' imagination might have blessed the plot with, the cruel murder of Bali. The great warrior Rama must have trained these savages, who were described by the poets as monkeys, etc., to win the battle against so powerful an enemy and did not seek the help of his brothers Bharata and Satrughna and the royal army. If Sita was carried by land to trace her destination would not have been difficult.

The history of Ceylon lingers in the ancient tradition of Rama and Ravana, and in connection with Prince Wijaya of Jambu Dwipa.

"The proper name of this island is Singhala, from which the term Ceylon is probably derived; by the Hindus on the Continent it is named Lanca, and by the Mahomedans Serindib. It is also frequently named Taprobane; a name which perhaps originates from Tapoo Ravana, or the island of Ravana, a demon and sovereign in the remote times of Hindu antiquity. The strange mythological poem, named the Ramayana, narrates the conquest of Ceylon and destruction of Ravana by Rama, king of Oudh, assisted by an army of gigantic monkeys, which appears to indicate an existing connection between this island and the northern quarters of Hindostan. The first meridian of the Hindus passes through the city of Oojein in Malwah, of which we know the position; but as, according to that projection, Lanca falls to the west of the present island, the Hindus are of opinion that Ceylon had formerly a much greater extent, and appearances between it and the Maldives tend to justify the belief. The name of the river Mahavilly Gunga has probably originated from Bali, a hero famous in Hindu romance; from whom the celebrated ruins at Mahavalipuram on the coast of Coromandel are also designated...... According to Ceylonese tradition, Prince Wijaya, the oldest son of the Emperor Singha Bahu (lion-armed), who reigned over the kingdom of Lala in Jambhu Dwipa (India), having embarked from the city of Singhapur, his father's capital, accompanied by 700 martial adherents, landed in Ceylon on a Tuesday, at the time of full moon, in the month of May, 543 years before the Christian era, and was appointed king of the island by Buddha, who had for that purpose transported himself to it through the air. On his arrival he found the country much infested by devils, who it appears rendezvoused in a large forest of Nha trees, whence Buddha compelled them to evacuate, and remove to an island named Giridiwa, which he had summoned for their reception from Jambhu Dwipa, and this being accomplished, he remanded the island with its cargo back to its original position. Prior to this event Ceylon was destitute of human occupants, Buddha therefore preached to the demigods who had assembled round him, and having established the ordinances of his religion, and rendered Ceylon a fit habitation for human beings, he returned to Jambhu Dwipa. In this manner, by the instrumentality of Buddha, and the assistance of the inferior deities Prince Wijaya, descended from the family of the sun, was the first king who reigned over Ceylon, which he continued to do for the period of 8 years."*

There is a place called Sittivacca about 30 miles from Colombo full of precious stone mines, which perhaps owes its name to Sita.

"Sittivacca (or Situaque).—A small town in the interior of Ceylon, and formerly noted for being the chief scene of intercourse, both friendly and hostile, between the

*Walter Hamilton's "Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of Hindusthan and the Adjacent Countries" Vol. II, pages 502-503.

Candians and their European neighbours. It was then a boundary town, and stands on a large branch of the Malwaddy river, which here makes a great sweep."*

Dondra-head and Adam's Bridge are important reminiscences of the Ramayana.

"Manaar (Gulf of)—This gulf separates Ceylon from the Southern Carnatic. Although too shallow to admit vessels of a large size, the depth of water is sufficient for sloops, donies and other small craft, which convey goods by this passage to and from the continent to Colombo, instead of taking the outward circuitous passage, and rounding the island by Dondra-head. The ridge of sand-banks named Adam's Bridge, present a great obstruction, and vessels are frequently obliged to lighten at Manaar before they can pass. This is called the iuner or Palk's passage, from a Dutchman of that name who first attempted it."†

"Dondra-head—The southernmost extremity of the island of Ceylon, near to which are still to be seen the ruins of what apparently has been a magnificent Hindu temple".‡

The names of Mathura and Neel-Gunga with the town and the river are important, and the town of that name connected with the exploits of Sri Krishna and the river Gunga connected with the hero of the Mahabharata, like Bali, is an important link in the Epic poetic imagination of a later day. That Ravana originally was a native of Tibet can be traced from the name of the lake of his name.

"Ravana's Hrad (or Roodh) Lake.—This lake is within a short distance west of Manasarovara, probably not more then ten miles, but being less holy it has not been examined with the same attention. Ravan' Hrad, by native travellers, was always represented as surrounding and insulating some large portions of rock, a little detached from the great Himachil. The name is derived from Rawan, a celebrated demon, the antagonist of the demi gods and legitimate sovereign of Ceylon, from whence he was expelled by the great Parasu Rama, assisted by the sage counsels of his gigantic prime minister, the monkey Hunnimaun.—(Moorcroft etc., etc.,)".§

Undes is the name of a tract of country west of Lake Ravana between Kailas and Himalaya.

"Undes (Urna Desa)—This is the general name of the tract of country situated between the Kailas and Himalaya ridges of mountains west of Lake Rawan's Hrad (or Roodh), and intersected by the course of the Sutlege river, which issuing from that lake flows to the north-west'.‖

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* Walter Hamilton's "Geographical, Stàtistical, and Historical Description of Hindusthan and the Adjacent Countries" Vol. II, page 515.

† Ibid. Vol. II, page 516.

‡ Ibid. Vol: II, page 521,

§ Ibid. Vol, II page 591/92.

‖ Ibid. Vol. II, page 598.

The worshipping of the deities Durga, Kali, Ganesha, Kartikeya and visiting shrines like Gaya, Jagarnath, Saugor, Benares, Allahabad, are respected in Tibet.

Adultery was not a crime in Tibet. Dancing is a favourite amusement and was performed by people of all ranks and degrees, but there are no professional dancers amongst the Tibetians. The choice of the wife is the exclusive privilege of the elder brother—one female associating with all the brothers of the family without any restriction of age or numbers. With respect to matrimony one male exercises an uncontrolled despotism over many females. A reference is found to be made to Nepaul about Bhimasena, the mighty Pandava of the great Epic.

"The numerous valleys among the prodigious mountains of which Nepaul in its extended sense consists, are inhabited by various tribes, that differ very much in language and considerably in customs. All that have any pretensions to be considered aboriginal, like their neighbours of Bhottan to the east, are by their features clearly marked as belonging to the Tartar or Chinese race of men, and have no sort of resemblance to the Hindus. The time when the Hindus penetrated into these regions is very uncertain. Bh·em Sen, the son of Pandoo, is said to have entered them, and probably was the first who introduced any sort of improvement. He still continues to be a favourite object of veneration with the rude tribes, both on the mountains and in their vicinity. Probably at no great distance from the time of that prince, and about the commencement of our era, Sakya, the last great teacher of the Buddhists, passed through the country, and settled at Lassa, where he is supposed still to animate the mortal portion of the Grand Lama".*

Jara Rakshasi and Kirata, about whom important references are made with the birth and name of Jarasandha and Arjuna's fight, are the aboriginal race names of Nepaul.

"Kirauts (Kiratas).—East from the territory of Nepaul Proper, the mountains are chiefly occupied by a tribe named Kiraut or Kichak, who at a period of remote antiquity appear to have made conquests in the plains of Camroop and Matsya, which now compose the Bengal districts of Rungpur and Dinagepur. These Kirauts are also frequently mentioned in Hindu legend as occupying the country between Nepaul and Madra, the ancient denomination in Brahminical writings of the country we call Bhutan.†"

Gandhara appears among the countries of India in Sanskrit literature from the Upanishadic period and its inhabitants are, no doubt, Gandharbhas famous for their health, beauty and artistic taste and occupation. The Gandharva kings fought with the Bharata kings and the most notable incident was the mention of a fight between king Chitrangada, son of Santanu and step-brother of Bhisma, and a Gandharva king, who won the battle and killed his adversary. The said king retired perhaps when he heard of the name and fame of Bhisma.

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* Walter Hamilton's "Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of Hindustan" page 668, Vol. II.

† Ibid. page 712 Vol. II.

It proves the antiquity of the kingdom of the Bharatas and the Gandharvas beyond the shadow of a doubt.

The princess Gandhari * was the queen of the blind king Dhritarastra and her piety and chastity made her one of the heroines of the Bharata Samhita, and the son of Vedavyasa, Sukra, recited the book to the Gandharvas. There is another significant fact that the happy valley of Kashmir is full of ancient remains of many huge buildings, parts of palaces and temples ascribed to the Pandavas They are the standing memories of the great heroes who were accepted as incarnations of the attributes of virtue and God, and these real personalities cannot be brushed aside as mythological beings as has a tually been done.

The seven sages belonging to a cycle of time called Manvantara are not fixed chronologically in the two Epics, and the Puranas and the genea'ogies given in them, and the names of descendants of sages and kings hardly reconcile with one another. The Manvantaras, or the cycles of time with which the early history of India is mysteriously wound up, and the great ages are so confusing that no useful purpose will be served by vainly trying to fix them in their definite and proper chronological sequence. Allegory and mythology also play a large part in the Epics, and the Puranas. The extravagance of Indian mythology and the fanciful popular etymologies and allegories, constitute a great impediment to the resuscitation of clear chronological data and the relative importance and bearing of facts embedded in the endless stories of the Epics and Puranas.

Close stuay of the two Epics and Puranas will enable any reasonable student to arrive at the conclusion that the division of history into four Yugas is a mere fiction, invented to o' scure their inter-relation. In the circumstances, the only course left open to find out the truth is to follow the reasonable method of fixing it from discourses between persons, with which the Mahabharata is full, and well-known incidents recited in the Epics and the Puranas, rather than to follow the incorrect genealogical tables or the Gotra schemes, some of which appear to be fanciful. The Bharata Samhita had its school of philosophy and morals. The many different editions of the Mahabharata which were grafted on the original theme, *viz.*, the Bharata Samhita, have their origin in a different school of philosophy with its distinctive outlook on morality, religion and theology.

Hence the different strata of the Mahabharata have been loosely super-imposed one upon another. The philosophical schools on which

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* **The Gandharis are mentioned in Rig and Atharva Vedas, and Gandhara country is known in Ancient Sanskrit Literature and Behistan inscription of Darius Herodotus.**

the Bharata Samhita and the versions of the Mahabharata were based cannot properly be understood if the structural strata of the present Epic are not properly investigated and shown in their clear outline. The task is admittedly a most difficult and tedious one, but the clue to the solution of this problem is in the ten days sacrifice of the Aswamedha or the horse sacrifice. The stories which were told at the time of the Aswamedha sacrifice have all been incorporated into the text of the Mahabharata. The compiler of the present Epic must have framed a connected narrative out of the whole mass of legends and myths that had grown round the controversies which centred round the performance of the sacrifice. But alas! however skilful might have been the work of the various reciters of the Mahabharata, it was not possible for any one man or group of men to add coherence to the Epic structures, which account for so much looseness of theme.

Nothing revealed the real date of the current Ramayana more than the performance of sacrifice under the Atharva Veda by king Dasaratha to get children through the help of Rishyasringa, though his own veteran priest Vasistha was there, as well as the condemnation by Rama of the practice of Yoga by a Sudra, who lowered his head from a tree over a fire as a penance to acquire merit. It speaks of the worst type of Brahmanical heirarchy which was not consistent with the real age of the Ramayana, far less of Treta Juga.

The caste system in India did not exist in the early Vedic period or at the end of the age of Dvapara, when the Bharata of the Mahabharata were composed one after the other. It reminds one of the account of Fa Hien, the Chinese traveller, bearing emphatic testimony to the degradation of the Chandalas in the Gupta age. Valmiki was a sage of the time of the Upanishadas and Aranyaks, when seers deemed marriage indispensable and the Brhadaranyaka gives the spell to obtain a male son. The saintly Svetaketu, who fixed one husband for a woman is an authority on the Kamasutra.

"Caste ought to be carefully distinguished from school, Karana—from race and family, Gotra and Kula. This subject is beset with many difficulties, and I do not myself profess to see quite clearly on the many intricate questions connected with it. With regard to the early history of races and families there is a rich literature in Sanskrit. .... You will find in the Vedic Grihya-sutras a list of Brahmanic Gotras* and, strange to say, you will see that the interdict against marriages between members of the same Gotra, is by no means so universal as it is supposed to be. Some of the statements set forth in these Brahmanic treatises may seem to represent *pia vota* rather than real facts, but we must not forget that even such theories have often very powerfully influenced the later development of social life in India."

"If there is anything like totemism in India, let us have a full and detailed description of each individual case, instead of hiding all that may be really

* *Vide* my History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, pages 379—388.

enlightening under the large bushel of totemism. Almost anything that outwardly distinguishes one race from another is now called totem, though what seems to be the same, and even what answers the same purpose, is by no means always the same in its origin. This habit of generalising and exaggerating has done infinite mischief. The North-American Indians have their totems, wrongly so spelt, and we know what they mean by these symbols. We find similar family symbols in many parts of the world, but to call them all totems is most inaccurate And what is the result? Because in some parts of the world marriages between members of the same totem are forbidden, statements that in Australia members of the same totem are encouraged to marry are received with incredulity. Because certain races abstain from eating animals which form their totems, we are told that the pig may in ancient times have been the totem of the Jews. *Si duo faciunt idem, non est idem.* Think only of the different Nagas or snakes in India. People are called Nagas, they worship Nagas, they use emblems of Nagas, and we may believe that they do not eat Nagas. Is the Naga or serpent therefore to be simply classed as a totem? There are *fagots et fagots*, and anyone who has lived in India knows that in India, as elsewhere, nothing has such various antecedents, and nothing serves such different purports, as Naga, the serpent"†

His article on the earliest Aryan civilisation contains very interesting information.

"In Sanskrit it is true, 'A R' root is not used with the meaning of ploughing. In that sense, the South-Eastern Aryas used Krsh, to draw lines or furrows, which is never used in that sense in the North-Western branch. The root 'A R' may, however, have left some very old derivatives there also, viz., in id, ida, and ira earth, Gk, epa in epae; and in urvara, field, for ar-vara-apovpa, In Zend urvara means what is grown, the produce of the field, rather than the field itself. If therefore Dr. Hehn admits a half-nomadic agriculture among the early Aryas, he will find this is all that we contended for ourselves.

"And what applies to the oldest art, the art *par excellence*, the art of ploughing, applies naturally to all the other arts which we ascribe to the Ancient Aryas, such as plaiting, sewing, spinning, weaving, and all the rest. They must all be conceived as most simple and primitive and it would be difficult in many cases to say where plaiting ends and weaving begins. All this, I thought, was understood, and it seems to me really as if our critics often called up a ghost in order to lay it... I consider it, therefore, as a well established principle that any word which occurs in Sanskrit or Zend, and at the same time in any one of the North-Western languages, may be used as a fossil belonging to a stratum previous to the Aryan Separation. If we find as in Sanskrit and ensis in Latin, we may safely place that name in the list of the oldest Aryan weapons. If we find sa sa for hare in Sanskrit, and haso for hare in OHG., we need not hesitate to claim for the United Aryas an acquaintance with that animal. I claim a right to treat Varuna as a common Aryan God, though of the other branches of the Aryan family Greece alone has preserved his memory in Ovpavos. But if the ancestors of Greeks and Hindus worshipped Varuna, that is enough to stamp him as an Aryan God, known before the Greeks crossed the Bosphorus or the Hindus set eyes on the Seven Rivers."

It cannot be expected that his conclusions will be right throughout. He has admitted that "Zend and Sanskrit may be treated as twins

* Professor Max-Muller's. Collected Works (Biographics of words and the Home of Aryas) pages 250—251.

† Professor Max-Muller's, Collected Works (Biographics of words and the Home of Aryas) page 248.

and that each has a character of its own." Sanskrit has many words which it shares with Greek, Latin, Teutonic, Slavonic and Celtic and of which no trace exists in Zend. But he could not make out truly what was the reason of the change of meaning of the words Deva in Sanskrit and Deeva in Zend, for the Sanskrit word means bright and god whereas the almost same word in Zend means just the opposite, an evil demon. He is not certain of his own views as he says:—

"I am quite willing to accept it as the result of a natural religious development if that can be proved". His own impression is "that such a change of meaning accompanied as it is by similar changes in the character of certain Vedic gods, such as the Nasatyas and Indra, who have become evil spirits in the Avesta (Naonhaitya Indra or Andra), points to a religious sch sm."

This impression is not in terms of his conclusion just before it, *viz.*,

"No two Aryan languages are so closely united as Sanskrit and Zend, and they also teach us that the vocabulary of the two languages together marks a decided historical progress on the part of the South-Eastern as compared with the North-Western branch. It proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Devas and the Assuras, the two branches of Kasyapa, lived in India and fought and separated, the Veda belonged to the Devas and Avesta to the Assuras, and there must needs be a change of meaning in the book of the Devas generally and their king Indra".

This is further borne out by the learned professor's conclusion:

"What is important for our purposes is that such names as Indra, Nasatya, Apam Napat, Aramati, Gandharva, Druh, Yama, etc., are utterly unknown to the other Aryas ...Sanskrit has many words which it shares with Greek, Latin, Teutonic, Slavonic and Celtic and of which no trace exists in Zend. The closeness of relationship of the whole Aryan family is, of course, best shown by its different members, sharing in common a grammatical articulation. One single grammatical form opens vistas which far transcend our ordinary chronology. Even a single particle, such as ka, and, in Sanskrit, ka in Zend, re in Greek, que in Latin. h in Gothic, ch in Celtic. all placed after the word, shows a continuity of growth and opens strata of thought which lie deeper than the deepest strata of our globe A look at the numerals from one to ten tells us more of forgotten intellectual labour than all the pyramids of Egypt and the palaces of Babylon. But while we admire these remnants of common Aryan work, we may also learn some lessons, though referring to a later period, from differences which divide the two great branches of the Aryan family".

All these prove ancient trade relations and Aryan expansion of knowledge and literature. For instance, the equivalent word for *even* is almost one, Sanskrit Dhana, Zend Dana, Slav Latin Duna (bread). Likewise Sanskrit Ayas, Zend Ayauh, Latin Aes, Teut. Aia and Sanskrit Ragata, Zend Ereyata, Arm. artsath, Celt Argat, Latin Argentum, Sans. Tula, Latin Tula, a name for balancing weight. Sanskrit Madhu, Zend Madhu, Greek Mead, Teut. Metu, Slav. Medu, Latin Medus, Celt Mid.

Sanskrit.	*Zend.*	*Latin.*	*Teut.*	*Slav.*	*Celt.*
Pasu	Pasu	Pecus	Brother	Peku	Brathir
Go	Gao			Cow	
Bhratar	Bratar			Bratru	

Sanskrit.	*Zend.*	*Teutonic.*	*Slav.*	*Celt.*
Svasura	Hvasura	Svaihra		
Pitar	Pitar	Fadar		
Mater	Matar	Moutar	Mater	Mathir
Duhitar	Dughdhar,	Dauhtra		

Iron or Metal. In the Mahabharata Shanti Parva it is used in describing the mouth of a plough-head.* Sanskrit is the mother of all languages and it belonged to India. It is evident that the Aryans moved from India to other parts of the world from the radical identity of the names of relationship, specially father, brother and daughter, metals, honey, cow and the general term of animal.

Professor Max-Muller says:—

"I know that those who cannot account for serpents in Germany or Scandinavia look upon a his as a name for dragon rather than serpent, and explain it as a half-mythological recollection of prehistoric times. But there remains Sk. sarpas, corresponding closely to Lat. serpens, and even to Greek creeping things, which cannot well be relegated to geological periods likewise".

Historian-like, Dr. Hehn lays great stress on the fact that the name of the horse was a common Aryan word and in the Rig Veda V. 61, 62, one finds:—

"Where are your horses, where the bridle? How could you, how did you come? the seat on the back, the rein in the nostrils? Their goad is behind, the heroes stretched their legs apart, putrakrithe naganayah".

The Iranians of the Avesta had full knowledge of the art of riding when they migrated from India and they did not learn it from other sources, as authors like C. Geiger, in his Oster, suggested.

The dating of pre-historic civilisation has always been a matter of conjecture, but thanks to the recent discoveries at Harappa Mohenjo-daro the idle speculations of many great scholars about early Indian civilisation have been set at rest. The words of Sir John Marshall in his book on the subject will be of interest.

"Never for a moment was it imagined that 5000 years ago, before even the Aryans were heard of, the Punjab and Sind, if not other parts of India as well, were enjoying an advanced and singularly uniform civilization of their own closely akin, but in some respects even superior to that of contemporaneous Mesopotamia and Egypt." Major R S. Wauchope reviewed his book and in doing so he said:—

"Sir John puts forward several reasons which go to prove that the climate of Mohenjo-daro was more attractive some five thousand years ago, when it was a flourishing city, to that which it is now. The country and climate of Sind must have differed considerably in the days of the early Indus civilization from what it now is and the richest grain lands in days before modern irrigation were the broad plains of Larkhana between the Indus and Kohistan or Kirthar hills.

*The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter 262, verse 46.

"It is in this district in a now comparatively barren land that Mohenjo-daro the "Mound of the dead" is situate, its precise position being 27 19′ N. by 68° 8′ E., some seven miles by road from Dokri on the North-Western Railway and twenty-five from Larkhana town. The mounds which hide the remains of the ancient city, or rather series of cities (since there are several of them superimposed one upon the other), are conspicuous from afar in the riverine flat, the highest of them near the north-west rising to a height of some seventy feet, the others averaging from twenty to thirty feet above the plain.

"Then as now the Indus was the source of fertility and wealth, on its inundation depended in a great measure the crops, on it also the life and commerce of the city, but if it were a beneficient giver, it might equally become the author of desolation and ruin. That this was so is shown by the pains which the builders of Mohenjo-daro had taken to provide their edifices with pre-naturally solid basements and to raise them aloft on artificial terraces which time and again were heightened in order to place them out of reach of the floods. Like the rest of Western Asia, the Indus country is still in the chalcolithic age, the age in which arms and utensils of stone continued to be used side by side with those of copper and bronze. Their society is organised in cities; their wealth derived mainly from agriculture and trade, is evidently analogous to other contemporary scripts of Western Asia and the nearer East."*

No nation in the world can claim civilization so ancient as the Indians, as has been proved by this discovery. Thus the theory of an Aryan invasion of India is discountenanced. Gods were believed in long before the priests came into being, yet it is held that they invented everything for their own interests and power. To discover the source of religion in the darkest antiquity is to trace first of all the movements of the human mind developing a spiritual being, bringing face to face the problems of Nature and human existence. Natural qualities are the perceptions of the five senses, but the spiritual divine self cannot be seen, spoken of, nor touched, nor heard, but is considered to be the most beautiful, pure and everlasting. The cultured pure heart can feel Him, gain strength and be united with Him. Philosophy is for the few but religion is meant for all. The observance of family discipline is neither strange nor wonderful.

In Ancient India education was limited. The world is a beautiful book, but is of little use to him who cannot read. The first idea in the human mind has been that destruction is sure to follow where the fear of God is gone. This is testified to by the Vedic hymns. But it is seldom that the virtue of the father survives in the son. It is for this reason in early Hindu society the author and originator of religion ranked first, then came the founders and protectors of kingdoms, then the builders of the wealth of the country and last, though not least, those who served the country and the builders of society. This is the short

*"Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization." By Sir John Marshall, late Director-General of Archæology in India.

history of Ancient Indian society, whose advancement followed through strict observance of religious, moral and social institutions.

Indians were commercial people, at first within the natural boundaries of India. The most favoured land of the world is where nature drew its boundary lines and favoured it not only with food and drink, but all the luxuries of life. The natural boundaries of India are such that it is unthinkable that any Western people in very early days could have thought of penetrating them from the West. The temperate regions of the world are where commercial people live and the people of the colder climes are essentially hunters, and migrate and have no chance of trading activities. The lowland is agricultural, whereas the mountains and forests offer inducements to domesticate animals for solving economic and trade questions. The trade and commerce in very early times was confined within India to food and drink.

In India there are countries of all climates—hot, cold and temperate. A temperate climate is better suited to manufacturing and commercial activities than any other climate. The native of colder regions must work harder than that of a temperate climate. Naturally the growth of civilisation can be ascribed to temperate climates. Artificial comforts and luxuries can only grow where there is a surplus product. Besides, the surface features of a land have a close relation to its commerce. Elevation affects vegetation and vegetable products as drought does pastural occupations or animal inroads. The seas and the great rivers were the early means of transport; as there were hardly any roads. Bengal was famous for manufacturing small and big boats (barges) and ships, and no land of India was so fertile as that of Bengal. Nor is this all. The great Kapila and his hermitage were in Bengal and Tamralipta or Tamluk was an old sea-port. All these give good grounds for concluding that Bengal was the seat of the early civilisation and it extended to the North-West, Punjab, and eventually to the hill tracts. It was the hunting mountaineers who offered the greatest resistance to the extension of this civilisation and the occupation of their country. They hold their own even now, and it is unthinkable that migration from the West could have taken place without an expedition like that of Alexander the Great.

That Indians were a commercial people is proved by their ancient laws. The father's property descended to his sons only and was divided equally between them. The daughters had no claim. Education and culture were circumscribed within the limits of the caste system on a commercial basis. Even the constitution of the Ancient Hindu Government was on commercial lines. Royalty is the gift of fortune, but his

safety did not lie in his aggrandisement or despotism. The advantages of conquest arose from knowing how to make good use of victory and how to make everyone happy. If a king failed to do this he was disgraced more than if he had been beaten in a battle, inasmuch as the former took place if he were deceived by things in his own power, but in the latter only by those which were in the hands of fortune. The protection that a king sought in those days seems to have been from the hatred of his subjects; fortresses and armies could not save a king if the people detested him and helped the neighbouring king to defeat him. Public opinion in those days was very strong and the hero of the Ramayana had to pay very dearly for it—he was forced to exile his tried, faithful and beloved wife Sita.

The names of good monarchs are preserved in the families of kings of India like Ikshaku, Manu, Bharata. Meritorious men create names for themselves by their abilities and when that line of family continues to do works for the benefit of the public the family becomes famous. Such is the case with the generic terms of Gotra names with the families of Brahmans and the Solar and Lunar dynasties of kings of India, which has much to do with the forms of worship Devajajna and Pitrijajna. But when a country became famous by a great number of good and celebrated men, the men were distinguished by the name of the country like Mithila, Panchala, Gour, Kanauj, etc.

Gour Brahmans officiated at the Snake sacrifice of Janmejoya, and Bhibhandaka Kasyapa's son, Risyasringa, was brought from Bengal to the Anga kingdom to officiate at a sacrifice of the king of that place, and he was given in marriage to the daughter of Dasaratha, Santa, whom the king adopted, and what is more, Risyasringa and his wife were called upon to perform the sacrifice by which the hero of the Ramayana and his brothers were born. All these are facts and figures of history. Families of ordinary merit have no place in the history of nations nor has any country in India which has not produced great men. From the names of the kings the country was named Bharatbarsa and Mithila, from the great sacrifices the places were named Naimisharanya and Kurukshettra.

There is a clear mention of the names of the places where people follow distinct Vedas. Krishna Yajur Veda was prevalent in the Kuru, Panchal and Pandava kingdoms, but Sukla Yajur Veda in Mithila, Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Guzarat, etc. The Krishna Yajus were called Taittiriya Samhita and Sukla Yajus were divided by Yajnavalkya, the priest of King Janaka of Mithila, and his seventeen disciples were in charge of the seventeen divisions of the Sukla Yajur Veda. Madhyandini and Kouthami Sakha were in vogue in Anga, Banga and Kalinga. Atharva Veda

was the last of all the Vedas. No Veda has so much to do with the sacrifices which had relation to mundane success as the Atharva Veda, and the other Vedas were divided by Veda Vyasa. It was for this reason that the Mahabharata, which was made after the Krishna Yajus, is called Karsana Veda, but Yajnavalkya introduced in it the Sukla Veda in his revision. Angira received Brahma Vidya from Bharadwaja, which was received by Mahasala Sounaka, the next reviser of the great Epic.

Those who followed the path of Devajajna, conquered the kingdom of the Sun and did not come back to the world. That was the aim of the kings of the Solar dynasty, and those who came back by the merit of their works after enjoying heaven were the Lunar dynasty and followers of Pitrijajna. Truth reigns supreme and overcomes all difficulties and is the personification of success. To remind men of the early maxims and deeds of their forefathers is considered to be the best method of awakening in nations the different principles of virtue in different countries. If in an aristocracy the people be virtuous, they will enjoy very nearly the same happiness as in a popular Government and the state will become powerful. Constitutional monarchs are happier than despotic ones, as they have to live under the wise administration of justice. This seems to be the real aim of the great Epic called the Mahabharata. This is the truth the poet sings :—

"That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things"
("Locksley Hall," Tennyson).

The Bharata Saṃhita, made after the Rig Veda, belonged to an earlier period than the Epics. Oudh was of comparatively later growth than the countries mentioned in the Vedas. The caste system and the force of public opinion are fully reflected in the Ramayana. The great Demon Ravana is made on the lines of modern thought.

"Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace.
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes.
That comes to all. (Milton 1, 66).

"By how much higher we see the mortals go
On Fortune's wheel, which runs a restless round
We see much sooner ; see his head below.
His heels ; and his form prostrate on the ground."

Superstition is more dangerous than disbelief in religion and contempt of things divine. Superstition can only be eradicated by parables and knowledge, so Epic literature is full of them. The form of God is made to overcome the question of crass superstition from the root. Virtue is a kind of health, beauty and good habit of the soul. In Ancient India boys were not trained by their parents by force and harshness, but old seers directed them to learning by what amused their

minds and suited the peculiar bent of the genius of each. This is depicted in the Pausa Parva of the Mahabharata, and shows how education was then given. Its necessity is not realised by Western scholars in this light, perhaps. The general system of education will obviate repeating it every time in the case of so many heroes of different times.

The next Parva Paulama, gives the next state of life after-education in the family of Bhrigu, with whom the kings of India intermarried; which is followed by the account of the family of the priest Kasyapa, who followed this profession first. It is he who saved the Kshatriyas, the race of kings of India, from the hands of the cruel descendent of Bhrigu, Parasurama, by a novel method. This is the first act of the Bharata Samhita, the true source of the two Epics of India.

Pargiter says that:—

"It is manifest from the Rig Vedic hymns that there was real civilisation in India, there were independent kings and famous exploits were celebrated in song*"

This is of great importance, coming as it does from an European scholar who was a Judge of the Calcutta High Court and who arranged the celebrated kings in order as follows:—

Ayodhaya dynasty.		Vaisala dynasty.		Aila race.
Mandbata King	...	Marutta King	...	Yayati King.
Sagara ,,	...	Yadava ,,	...	Bharata ,,
Bhagiratha ,,	...	Sasabindu ,,	..	Suhotra ,,
Ambirasa ,,	...	Anava ,,	...	Ranti Deva ,,
Dilipa ,,	...	Sivi ,,	...	Brhadratha ,,
Rama ,,	...	Gaya and Amurtarayasa of Gaya.		

Emperors :—Yayuvanasvi Mandhatr, Bhagiratha, Bharata, Marutta and Karta-virya-Arjuna. Highly renowned kings for their wide sway are Dilipa, Nrga, Nahusa, Ambirasa, Sivi Ausinara, Rsabha, Aila, Nrga, Kusika, Gadhi, Somaka and Dilipa, and those for magnificence Rantideva, Nabhaga (Ambirasa), Yauvanasva (Mandhat), Prthur, Vainya, Bhagiratha, Yayati, Nahusa and Hariscandra, and those noted for their devotion and loyalty to Brahmins by gifts are Rantideva, Sankrtya, Sivi Ausinara, Pratardana, King of Kasi, Ambirasa, Yuvanasva, Rama Dasarathi, Karandhama's grandson Marutta, Bhagiratha. Devavrdha, Janamejoya, Vrsadarbhi, Brahmandatta, Mitrasaha, Bhumanyu, Satadyumna, Lomapada, Satyasandha, Nimi

* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Historical Tradition." page 39.

of Vidarbha, Manu's son Sudyumna, Sahasrajit and Prasenajit and others.* The order after Puru is worthless, thus it places Ailavila (Dilipa II) before Dhundhumara, Mucukunda and Yuvanasva, though he was long posterior to them in the Ayodya line.‡"

His conclusions are interesting and worth mentioning.

'It is very remarkable, as pointed out before, how widely these kings differ from those extolled in the Rig Veda and Vedic literature, even when the lists are Brahmanical. Rig Vedic kings are practically non-existent here, and eulogies of kings in all that literature hardly count in the compilation of these lists. This fact shows how entirely apart from general popular thought stood Vedic literature in this matter. The popular scale of values was totally different from that of Vedic Brahmans. Hence it is clear how little Vedic Brahmans were in touch with public life and interests, and of what small importance Vedic literature is as regards historical matters. These divergencies and also the fact that the Puranas sometimes contain statements that differ from those in Brahmanic literature show that the Puranic stream of tradition flowed independently of the Vedic stream. The former sometimes incorporated Brahmanical doctrines and tales, and Vedic literature sometimes borrowed from Puranic and Aitihasic (historical) sources. The divergence however is substantial and shows that the Puranic Brahmans must have received the different account when they took from the Puranas, and that they preserved it, notwithstanding the disagreements, as being genuine tradition......... The true inference therefrom would be that the Puranic Brahmans had already begun to incorporate some dharma in the Puranas in his time.†"

Draupadi and Dhristadyumna were born out of the sacrifice referred to above. The portion of the Mahabharata relating to the incident has great historic importance. The hermitage of Kasyapa was on the bank of the Bhagirathi, where the king Drupada went. The two Brahmarsi Jaja and Upajaja, descendants of the Kasyapa family, officiated as the chief priets of Drupada to make him blessed with children and a son, and the good queen's refusal to go to Jaja reflects the most delicate idea of modesty of those days. There the incident of Parasurama was referred to by the priest Jaja before accepting the priesthood. The younger brother cited that his elder brother was covetous and he would perhaps agree to do the sacrifice moved by presents. Both the brothers eventually took part in the ceremony. Only that portion of the translation referring to the Epic idea of modesty is given below:—

"Upajaja said:—'O king, a son will be born to you who will possess, as you desire, great prowess, great energy and great strength.' The Brahmana said:—"Then King Drupada, being desirous of obtaining a son who was to slay the son of Bharadwaja (Drona), began to make the necessary preparations for the success of his wish. Jaja then poured libations of the ghee on the sacrificial fire and ordered the queen thus, 'O queen, O daughter-in-law of Prsata, come here a son and a daughter have come for you.' The queen said:—'O Brahmana my mouth is filled with saffron and other perfumes, my body bears many sweet scents; I am not now fit for accepting the sacrificial ghee which would give me offspring. O Jaja, wait for me a little, for that happy consummation.' Jaja said;—'Whether you come or wait, why

* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient India Historical Tradition," pp. 41, 42. ‡page 42.
† Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," pp. 42-43, and 49.

should not the object of this sacrifice be accomplished when the oblation has already been prepared by me and sanctified by Upajaja's invocations ?"

This is referred to in verses 75 and 76, Chapter CCCXLVIII, Shanti Parva, as worshipping God Narayana with horse head, illustrating its old story. This makes the difference between Vedic and Epic ideas of worship and modesty quite clear and marked.

The sort of sacrifice performed by Jaja and Upajaja was not praised and the cultured ladies avoided the request of the performers of these sacrifices on false pretexts. The Mahabharata says (Shanti Parva, Chapter CCLXIII, verse 10).

"If the sacrificer and the priest allow themselves to be guided by desire of fruit, their children take the stigma. If, however, they are not moved by the desire of fruit, their children become the same. From sacrifices originate children like clear water from the sky" "They who seek the acquisition of the highest object of life, who do not hanker after earthly riches, who do not care for future provision, and who are shorn of envy, follow the course of truth and practise self-control as their sacrifice" (verse 18).

This was the Vedic sacrifice and the sacrifice reformed under Yoga system is mentioned:—

"They who know the distinction between body and soul, who are given to Yog, and who meditate on 'OM' always succeed in pleasing others". (Verse 19).

The Yoga system of worship was introduced and it was not then well spoken of or revered.

"The sages of Yore were not followers of these doctrines of Yoga". (Verse 26).

Benares was the centre of ancient culture and learning—the proud sage Jajali was advised to go there to learn the true religion from the very wise Vaisya trader Tuladhara. (Ibid CCLXI, verses 41,42).

The Epic History of creation dwelling on the difference between the religion of renunciation and of action is said in the beginning of the Mahabharata of Vyasa, in Chapter CCCXLI (Shanti Parva) in the version of the Souti-Sounaka discourse with the questions—

i "How is the powerful God Narayana, master of the Vedas and their Branches, at once the doer and enjoyer of sacrifices?"

ii. "Why has he then made so many gods partaking the shares in sacrifices favouring religion of action while he himself is a follower of religion of renunciation?"

Here God is given the distinct name of Mahapurusha (verse 29) and the Narayana section begins with his ode by Narada in the old style of language.

This chapter is the introduction of the Bharata Samhita, which begins with the ode of Mahapurusha by the divine minstrel Narada. Narada and Vasistha were brothers in-law. Narada was Kasyapa's son and Vasistha was his son-in-law. They were contemporary men. So Vasistha's becoming priest to the Bharata kings is not strange. How

he got the priesthood however, is of interest. It will give the name of the contemporary Bharata king. The Mahabharata mentions that the virtuous king Sambarana was a worshipper of the Sun and all men but Brahmans idolised him.* He lost his kingdom, which was overrun by the armies of the Panchals and he recovered it from them through the good offices of his newly appointed priest Vasistha, whom he met in his flight in the Punjab † and who was married to the daughter of the Sun through his priesthood. The engagement of the priest Vasistha was said to have taken place to recover the kingdom as well as for the marriage. In Chapter CLXXV it is mentioned by the Gandharva King Chitraratha as being exclusively for the marriage.

The fight between Vasistha and Visvamittra has been mentioned. King Dushmanta was a contemporary of Visvamitra, who married his daughter Sakuntala, the mother of Bharata. The son Kuru was married to a girl belonging to the Yadu family.‡ This was not the first instance. Puru's grandson Prachinata married Asmaki of the Yadab family. It is evident that marriage was not then forbidden between agnates. This Chapter XCV, Adi Parva, is also important as it gives the marriage relations between the Royal houses of India. Janmejoya, the son of Poru, was the first of that name. Matinara's mother was Jvala, the daughter of Takshaka. Matinara started a twelve years' sacrifice to please Saraswati and won her as his wife. It is clear that the marriage alliances between the kings of India took place between the countries of Kosala, Drisadvata, Kekaya, Bidurva, Anga, Kalinga, Gandhara Bisala and Takshaka, etc. The daughter of Suka Kritvi was married to Anuha, of the Nipi family, king of Kampilya of the South Panchala, and his son was married to Sauniti, the daughter of Devala. All these inter-marriages between Brahman sages and Kshatriya kings establish beyond doubt that the hereditary caste system was not then fully crystallised and there is a marriage which is called Attri-Bharadvaji.

The genealogy of Chapter XCV is described by Vaishampayana as he heard it from Dvaipayana himself (*vide* verse 6), consequently it is authorised and contains the names of the queens of the different countries. Its importance therefore cannot be minimised. The learned Pargiter admits rightly that in genealogy son means descendant and father means ancestor. Consequently, the genealogical tables he published are nothing but suggestions based on his own preparation, on which no reasonable man can depend for tracing the ancient civilisation, customs and laws. But it proves beyond doubt two important facts as to the age

* Chapter CLXXIII, verse 18, Adi Parva.
† Chapter XCIV, Adi Parva.
‡ The Mahabharata, Chapter XCVI, Adi Parva,

of the Epics of India and their worth as the history of Ancient India. The kings of the two Epics are found contemporaneous and belonging to the same age. That the heroes of the Epics were not mythological, fanciful characters are proved in the names of places in India.

In Dakshina Kosala there is a hill called Ramagiri, distinguishing the place where Rama lived in his exile as his own mother Kausalya, belonged to that place. Kaikeyi, the step-mother of Rama belonged to the Kekaya country; her son Bharata obtained that kingdom and his two sons Taksa and Puskara are said to have conquered Gandhar and reigned in two places, which were hall-marked with their names Takssa (the famous Taxilla) and Puskaravati. Satrughana attacked Satvata Yadavas, killed Madhaba Lavana and built the capital of Mathura,* where his two sons Subahu and Surasena reigned. The name of Surasena lingers in the name of the country. It is said also that the name owes its origin to a son of the Haihaya Arjuna Kartavirya. Bhima Satvata seems to have recovered the kingdom and Andhaka reigned there as a contemporary of Rama's son Kusa,† who founded a town Kusasthali on the Vindhya hills. Andhaka's descendents reigned at Mathura down to Ugrasena and his son Kamsa, whom Krishna and Balarama killed.

Lakshmana's sons Angada and Cadraketu reigned in Karapatha-desa near the Himalayas, where their names are found in the capitals Angadiya and Candracaka. Bhima Satvata was a contemporary of Rama and Andhaka was of Rama's son Kusa. So the Yadavas and Rama become contemporaneous and of the same age, the end of Dvapara. The Yadavas were referred to in the Uttarakanda, and Yajati and Nahusa are mentioned in the genealogy of the Ikshaku family of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, thus establishing matrimonial alliances between the Bharata and Ikshaku families. They both descended from one stock. Chyavana was a contemporary of Nahusa and married Sukanya, the daughter of Suryati, king of Guzerata, and Usanas Sukra, the brother of Chyavana, married his daughter Devajani to Yajati, which makes it clear that Sukra wanted to hold sway in the kingdom of Yajati. Rcika Aurva married the daughter of Gadhi, the king of Kanyakubja Satyabati, and from him descended Jamadagni. Visvamittra, son of the king Gadhi, played a very important part in the Ramayana as being a contemporary of Rama.

All these prove conclusively that the heroes of the two Epics of India belong to the same age and were closely connected by matrimonial

* Uttarakanda Ramayana, Canto 62, verse 6.

† Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 170. He quoted the Mahabharata account.

alliances. Bharadvaja has raised important controversy as to who was the priest of the king of Benares and is mentioned in both the Epics as playing important parts. Pargiter says:—

"There is a story about the famous Paurava king, Dusyanta's son Bharata, and Bharadvaja. Bharata had three wives and sons by them; they killed their sons because he was disappointed in them, and he was thus bereft of heirs. In order to obtain a son he performed many sacrifices and lastly made an offering to the Maruts; they gave him Brihaspati s son Bharadvaja as an adopted son. Bharadvaja thus became a Kshatriya; he did not succeed Bharata, but begot a son named Vitatha; Bharata then died. Bharadvaja afterwards consecrated Vitatha as the successor, and then either died or departed to the forest. This is a very remarkable story and deserves careful consideration, because it throws much light on the traditional accounts of Bharata's successors, the Bharatas or Bhāratas. It is emphasized by the statement in the Vayu that Bharadvaja by the adoption became a Kshatriya and had two fathers, and so was called Dvyamusyayana".*

The sage Bharadvaja raised important questions on the progressive stages of society and caste but the answers were not all to the point. He said it was a commonplace cant of the world that happiness was the chief aim of life, and that it originated from good acts and sorrow from sins. The first Creator Brahma observed the vow of celibacy, the lord of Durga reduced the god of love to ashes and happiness was not sought by great people. "What is the attribute of the soul which was sought by the sages?", he questioned. Bhrigu answered by referring to the stages of life and the different modes of living. But the real answer was given in the great Epic in the lives of the great heroes. The Epic history of ancient civilisation begins from the days of the Bharata kings and gives a glimpse of the previous time in the old Gathas and traditions it set forth.

Both the Epics belong to the Dvapara age and they depict the civilisation, customs and laws of that time. Veda was arranged in the Dvapara age and the question of sacrifice became acute, as to whether animals or corn should be offered, in the time of Basu Uparichara of the Chedi dynasty, with whose account the Mahabharata begins, and the question of religion with the doctrine of Ahimsa (aversion to slaughter) became the burning question of the day. This is admitted by an European scholar like Pargiter (see page 315 of his book "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition").

The learned Par iter has given his important opinion about Vyasa's work regarding his arrangement of the Vedas as follows:—

"The final compilation was made after Devapi's time and not until that of Vyasa who followed him by about half a century, because hymns are attributed to Asita or Devala, and Devala was a contemporary of the Pandavas (page 288) and so of Vyasa. Vyasa must have added all the hymns that were incorporated latest, and completed the canon. Tradition entirely supports this. It says generally that he

*Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," pages 159-60.

arranged the Veda he divided the Veda into four, he divided the four pada Veda into four; and there are explicit statements that he compiled the Rig Veda. Both tradition and the latest hymns in the Rig Veda therefore show the time when the canon was established, and tradition proclaims the man by whom that was done. Only a Rishi of commanding ability, knowledge and eminence could have made it a canon accepted unquestioningly thereafter, and that is exactly the character and position which tradition unanimously attributes to Vyasa, a Rishi pre-eminent above all others. He would probably have completed that work about a quarter of a century before the Bharata battle, that is, about 980 B.C. (p. 182). The priestly literature has suppressed all these facts (page 10)."

"There is no definite tradition about the Atharva Veda, but some statements throw light on it."*

He has advanced good grounds regarding the development of Brahminism in India and the Kshatriya influence of mutual co-operation to advance civilisation in different parts of India as is reflected in the Epics. The region which was called Brahmavarta in Manu ii, 17, 19, and other names, Mahabharata iii, 83, 5074, 7073-8, owes its origin to Brahminism, and about the Kshatriya influence, the learned Pargiter says:—

"Brahmanism thus appears to have developed in accordance with Aila ideas, and to have owed much of its advance to the influence of Kshatriyas, (Vedic Index ii, 87. There is no good reason to doubt that Brahmanas learnt from princes; see ante, page 96), first, of Visvamitra and his sons, and afterwards mainly of the Bharata princes and Kshatriyan Brahmanas. It continued to flourish in harmony with later kings of that family, and consolidated its position as a caste, especially in connection with sacrifice. That such Aila influences did produce modifications is suggested by the remarkable statements made in the Ramayana (which can hardly have been the outcome of later Brahmanical views); first, that, while eastern and southern kings and kings of the distant Punjab were invited to Dasaratha's sacrifice at Ayodhya, none of the neighbouring Paurava (Bharata) and Yadava kings, who flourished then in all the middle region of N. India (page 170 2, 276), were invited; and secondly, that Dasaratha called in the help, not of Brahmanas from Madhyadesa, but of the rustic Risyasringa from Anga (for his alleged upbringing and qualifications, see MBh iii, 110, 9990 f; Ram i, 9 and 10, see page 164). It was at that time that the great development of Brahmanism had taken place among the Bharatas. Ayodhya and the Vasisthas had no association then with that Brahmanically elite region. Brahmanism as it took shape under the Bharatas apparently differed from that at Ayodhya. Moreover, all those Brahmanas had little in common with the non-Arayan tribes of the Deccan (though Deccan kings were invited to the sacrifice), as is suggested by the maltreatment of munis by Rakshasas in the story of Rama, for estrangement grew into hostility, which when developed was portrayed in the frequent stories of how Rishis were afflicted by such folk stigmatized and mythologized as demonic—a view which was carried back into earlier times in later Brahmanic stories. Ultimately Brahmanism as developed among the Bharatas became the dominant form."†

It must not be overlooked that the Vaisyas of Ancient India played a very important part in the progress of civilisation and were more

* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition", page 318.

† Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition", page 314.

numerous and more powerful than the Kshatriyas. Vedas and Epics testify to it. In White Yajur Veda there is Vaisya Sabitri and Black Yajur Veda says that the Vaisyas owe their existence to Rik. Trittiriya Brahman bears this out. The Vedas say, Vaisya is Arya and one of the three colours of the Aryas of Ancient India. They were followers of Bhadrakali and it is said in the Srimad Bhagabata that when the king of the Vaisyas, in order to obtain a son, attempted to sacrifice the mute Bharata of Angirasa family whose place is in Allahabad the deity saved his life and took the life of the king who offered the sacrifice. These merchants were the pioneers of civilisation and introduced it all over the world in their maritime trade. They introduced caligraphy for trade purposes.

Civilisation spread from India and no country in the world can claim its civilisation prior to India. Besides, the prime cause of primitive migration is usually set down as a state of pressure on the food supply and the necessity of seeking a new home for comfort. All these do not apply to India, where the only question was how to make use of the surplus food and drink as a pressure on the wealth supply of the country. It was for this that the Vaisyas were much revered by the kings of India and the Brahmanas. To guard against the temporary failure of monsoon rains irrigation is necessary. Drainage must follow to guard against the land being waterlogged and sour. The Chenab is one of the five rivers of the Punjab where a large number of canals were constructed serving no less than 3,000 square miles which had been practically a desert. The dry districts of the North-West were under cultivation in the days of the Epic.

Consequently trade and traders did not live in those parts of India nor could they thrive there. Bengal was famous for boat and vessel making as well as for fishing from time immemorial. The names of Jahnu, Bhagirath and Sagar became celebrated for improving Bengal by the cutting of the sea, bringing the Ganges to fall into the sea, thereby giving every facility to trade and commerce. Vedas and Epics testify that both inward and outward trade was carried on by vessels and boats. The most fertile country in India was Bengal and it received the epithet of "Golden" for its prosperity and growth. That was the place where the great sage Kapila lived and the heroes of the Epics paid tribute to the sacred place. The Asuras Madhu and Kaitava lived in the jungles of Muthura and Gayasura at Gaya, a great shrine of India where the oblations to the dead are offered. Such a practice is also followed in Orissa. Baitarani is the name of that place. All these give good grounds for thinking that from Bengal and Orissa the ancient civilisation travelled to the Upper regions of the Punjab.

How trade and traders were revered in Ancient India can be gathered from the great Epic Mahabharata as well as from the Puranas. Vaisyas were not in the good books of the Brahmanas and the kings could not be persuaded to go against them easily. The name Vaisya owes its origin to the generic term of the mass people *'viz'*. How very powerful the purse proud Vaisya was, can very well be realised from the discourse of Indra to Kasyapa. Kasyapa, who belonged to the famous family of priests to the kings of India, was thinking of committing suicide on being run over by the chariot of a rich Vaisya. Indra, moved by the poor man's condition, appeared to him in the form of a jackal and gave him good advice to give up his foolish idea of destroying a life which was so precious and especially that of a Brahman (180 Chapter, Shanti Parva). The story depicts the difference between man and beast and how the advantages of man can be utilised, and if this was not done, how a man was transformed into a beast by divine dispensation. Man is not contented in any state of life on earth. It contains the ideal life of good conduct for a cultured man of those days and that portion is given from the translation of the text :—(Chapter CLXXX, verses 41-54, Shanti Parva, English Translation of the Mahabharata).

" You should not, O Brahmana, renounce your life, even if any blame affects you which can be proved and which can lead to your excommunication. Rise, and practise virtue. You should not throw away your life. If, O twice-born one, you listen to me and confide in my words, you will acquire the highest reward of the religion laid down in the Vedas. Engage in Vedic studies, and properly maintain your consecrated heart, and observe truth, and self-control, and charity Never compare yourself boastfully with another. They who, by studying the Vedas, become competent for celebrating sacrifices for themselves and others, need not regret or fear any sort of evil. They who are born under an auspicious constellation on an auspicious lunation and at an auspicious hour, try their best for performing sacrifices, practising charity, and procreating children, and wishing to pass their time cheerfully in those acts, at last acquire very great happiness. They, on the other hand, who are born under evil stars, inauspicious lunations and at evil hours, cannot perform sacrifices and get progeny and at last fall into the Asura order. In my previous birth I had much useless learning. I always tried to find out reasons and had very little faith. I used to censure the Vedas. I was unacquainted with the four-fold objects of life, and was devoted to the science of reaping which is based upon ocular or tangible proofs. I used to speak of reasons only. Indeed, in assemblies, I always spoke of reasons. I used to speak irreverently of the injunctions of the Srutis and addressed Brahmanas haughtily. I was an atheist, a sceptic, and though really ignorant, proud of my learning. This birth of a jackal that I have got in this life is the outcome, O twice-born one, of those sins of mine. If even after hundreds of days and nights, a jackal that I am now, I can once again secure the birth of humanity, I shall then pass my life in contentment, caring for the true objects of existence, and engaged in sacrifices and gifts. I shall then know what should be known, and shun what should be shunned. Thus addressed, the ascetic Kasyapa, rising up, said,— 'O, you are surely endued with great knowledge and intelligence! I really wonder at all this'. With eye whose vision was extended by knowledge, the Brahmana then saw

that being who had addressed him as Indra the king of the gods and the lord of Sachi. Kasyapa then adored that god having the best of horses to carry him. Receiving afterwards with the god's permission, the Brahmana returned to his house".

It will also be seen in the Mahabharata that Vaisya Tuladhara read a lecture to a sage who considered himself a successful Jogi. In the sacrifices the Vaisya received curd. Bhalanda, Bandya, Samkriti were Vaisyas who composed Vedic hymns or incantations according to Matsya Purana and Markandeya Purana. King Nabhag married the daughter of a Vaisya. Harivamsa says the two sons of Nabhagaristha became Brahmanas. Yujutsu, who was Dhritarastra's son by a Vaisya wife, alone survived the great battle of Kurukshettra and had gone over to the side of the Pandavas.

In Ancient India trade and traders had a very high place. The provinces not included in the Brahmavarta in Manu Samhita belonged to the traders, who were independent men leaving the kingdom of any king who would persecute them at the instance of the priests. Besides the traders were not in any way under the domination of kings or their priests and were left in the peaceful enjoyment of their occupation to increase the wealth of the country by trade and commerce. The Vaisyas were thus in a better position than the Brahmans and Kshatriyas at the time of the Indian Epics. The caste division during the time of the Epic composition was more a matter of merit than heredity. There is a very important discourse between Bhrigu and Bharadvaja which explodes the wrong theory that Aryans and non-Aryans were the invaders and the aboriginies of India, respectively. (Chapter CLXXXVIII, Shanti Parva, Slokas 10-17, page 280, English Translation of the Mahabharata).

"Bhrigu said:—There is in fact no distinction between the different castes. The whole world at first consisted of Brahmanas. Created equally by Brahman, men have, on account of their acts, been divided into various castes. They who found excessive pleasure in enjoyment, became possessed of the attributes of harshness and anger, endued with courage. and were unmindful of the works of piety and worship,—those Brahmanas possessing the quality of Darkness, became Kshatriyas. Those Brahmanas again who, unmindful of the duties laid down for them, became endued with both the qualities of Goodness and Darkness, and follow the professions of cattle-tending and agriculture, became Vaishyas. Those Brahmanas again who were given to untruth and injuring other creatures possessed of cupidity,—performed all sorts of works for their maintenance and had no purity of behaviour, and thus possessed of the quality of Darkness, became Sudras. Divided by these occupations, Brahmanas, falling away from their own order became members of the other three castes. All the four castes, therefore, have always the right to perform all pious rites and sacrifices. Thus were the four castes at first created equally by Brahman who ordained for all of them the observances described (in the Vedas). Cupidity alone brought about the fall of many, who were possessed by ignorance. The Brahmanas are always devoted to the Brahma-scriptures and practising vows and restraints, are capable of understanding Brahma. Their penances, therefore, never prove fruitless

They amongst them are not Brahmanas who cannot understand that every created thing is Supreme Brahma. These, falling away, became members of various (inferior) castes."

Later on the great sage describes the region of the Huna sages where the aborigines did not dwell but where the pious, cultured sages dwelt. This is the region about which the sage Bharadvaja heard but did not see and wish to know.

"Bhrigu said:—Towards the north on the other side of Himavat, which is sacred and full of merit, there is a sacred, blessed, and highly desirable region. That is called the other world. The men who dwell in that region are righteous in act, pious, of pure hearts, freed from cupidity and errors of judgment, and not subject to miseries of any sort. That region is, equal to Heaven, possessed of excellent attributes. Death comes there at the proper time. Diseases never attack the inhabitants. Nobody looks for the wives of other people. Every one is devoted to his own wife. These people do not assail or kill one another, or covet one another's things. There is no sin or doubt. There the fruits of all sacred rites are visible. There some enjoy seats and best sorts of drinks and food, and live within palaces and mansions. There some, bedecked with ornaments of gold, surround themselves with every article of enjoyment. There are again, some that eat very sparingly for only keeping body and soul together. There some, with great exertion, try to suppress the vital airs. Here some men are devoted to righteousness, and some addicted to deceit. Some are happy and some wretched; some are poor and some rich. Here are to be found exhaustion, and fear, and delusion and painful hunger. Here cupidity for wealth is also seen a passion that stupefies even the learned. Here various opinions are advanced by those who do virtuous or sinful deeds. That wise man who knows all those opinions which may be divided into two sorts, is never sullied by sin. Deceit with fraud, theft, slander, malice, oppression, injury, treachery, and untruth, are vices which destroy the merit on one's penances. A learned man however, who avoids them, find the merit of his penances multiplied. Here there is much thought about fair and sinful acts. This region where we live is the field of action. One reaps the fruits of his actions, according to the life he has led. Here in days of Yore, the very Creator and all the gods having performed proper penances, with the Rishis became cleansed and attained to Brahma. The northern part of the Earth is highly auspicious and sacred. People of our region who perform fair deeds or show regard for Yoga, are born in that region. Others are born in the intermediate species. Some again, when their lease of life run out, become lost on Earth".*

The Northern part of India (or perhaps the region to the north of the Himalayas, *i. e.*, Tibet) was then regarded as Heaven, the middle parts are the Earth and the Southern parts are Patal, perhaps. Bhrigu perhaps had been to Tibet, whence a copy of Bhrigu Samhita has been rescued.

Manu gives the centres of ancient civilisation in the distinct divisions of India. The country lying between the mountains of the Himalaya and the Vindhya right upto the sea from east and west was called Aryavarta. The place between the rivers of Saraswati and Drishadvati, which formed part of Kurukshettra, was called Brahmavarta; and that between the Ganges and the Jumna, including the district of

* The Mbh: Chapter CXCII, Shanti Parva, Slokas 8—22, page 285.

Mathura, which were the territories of the Kurus, Panchals, Sarasenas and Matsyas, was called Brahmarsti Desa. The confluence of the Ganges, the Jumna and the Sarasvati in Allahabad and Tribeni in Bengal were held in great esteem from a very long time. The name of Prayaga owes its origin to the number of celebrated sacrifices performed there by the kings and celestials and is held as a great shrine by all sections of Hindus, *viz.*, the Yogis, Fakirs, Sanyasis and domestic people. Such is also the case with the Ashrama of Kapila at the junction of the river Ganges and the sea.

Professor Rapson's comparison of the religious and scoial conditions during the Vedic periods of progress is interesting.

"Religious and social conditions, as reflected in the Yajur Veda, differ very widely from those of the period of the Rig Veda. All the moral elements in religion seem to have disappeared, extinguished by an elaborate and complicated system of ceremonial which is regarded no longer as a means of worship but as an end in itself. Sin in the Rig Veda means the transgression of the divine laws which govern the universe: in the Yajur Veda it means the omission—whether intentional or accidental—of some detail in the endless succession of religious observances which filled man's life from birth to death. The sacrifice had developed into a system of magic by means of which supernatural powers might be attained; and the powers thus gained might be used for any purpose, good or bad, spiritual or temporal, and even to coerce the gods themselves. In the Yajur Veda also, the earlier stages of the caste-system, in essentially the form which it bears to the present day, are distinctly seen. Not only are the four great social divisions hardening into castes, but a number of mixed castes also are mentioned. Thus were fixed the outlines of the system which subsequently, by further differentiation according to trades, etc., became extraordinarily complicated. The tremendous spiritual power which the sacrifice placed in the hands of the priestly caste, was no doubt the cause which directly led to the predominance of this caste in the social system. The religion and the social system of the Yajur Veda represent, to a great extent, the development of tendencies which are clearly to be recognized in the Rig Veda; but they also, no doubt, show the influence of the religious beliefs and the social institutions of the earlier non-Aryan inhabitants of India, and it seems possible sometimes to trace this influence. To cite one instance only. Snake-worship is common among primitive peoples in India. No trace of it is to be found in the Rig Veda but it appears in the Yajur Veda. The presumption, therefore, is that it was borrowed from the earlier non-Aryan peoples."*

Professor Rapson speaks of the regions where the hymns of the Rig Veda were composed by their geographical references. He thinks that the twenty-five rivers relate to the great branches of the five rivers of the Punjab. He admitted that the great rivers of Jumna, Ganges and Saraswati were known in the times of the Rig Veda and they are independent rivers and have branches. His conclusion "that the Aryans of the Rig Veda inhabited a territory which included the portions of South East Afghanistan, the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab" cannot be correct.† He has admitted that.

*Professor E. J. Rapson's "Ancient India", pages 47—49.

† Ibid, pp. 39—40.

"The type of civilisation depicted in the Rig Veda is by no means primitive. It is that of a somewhat advanced military aristocracy ruling in the midst of a subject people of far inferior culture."* 'The Aryan tribes were not always united against the people of the land, but sometimes made war among themselves. Each tribe was governed by a king; and the kingly office was usually hereditary, but sometimes, perhaps, elective." "The constitution of the tribe was modelled on that of the family and the king, as head, ruled with the aid and advice of a council of elders who represented its various branches. Thus, the state of society was patriarchal: but it was no longer nomadic. The people lived in villages, and their chief occupations were pastoral and agricultural. In war, the chief weapons were bows and arrows, though swords, spears, and battle-axes were also used. The army consisted of foot-soldiers and charioteers . ...The war-chariots, which may have been used only by the nobles, carried two men, a driver and a fighting man who stood on his left. In the arts of peace considerable progress had been made. The skill of the weaver, the carpenter, and the smith furnish many a simile in the hymns. The metals chiefly worked were gold and copper. It is doubtful if silver and iron were known in the age of the Rig-Veda. Among the favourite amusements were hunting, chariot-races and games of dice—the last mentioned a sad snare both in Vedic times and in subsequent periods of Indian history .....The sacrifice is the link which connects man with the gods, who take delight in the oblations, and, in return, shower blessings—wealth in cows and horses, and strength in the form of stalwart sons—on the pious worshipper. There are also other aspects of this religion. The spirits of the departed dwell in 'the world of the Fathers', where they are dependent for their sustenance on the offerings of their descendants; and ever lurking around man are the demons of famine and disease, whose insidious attacks can only be averted through the favour of the beneficient deities......In the early period of the Rig-Veda, the caste-system was unknown—the four castes are only definitely mentioned in one of the latest hymns—yet the social conditions which led to its development were already present ..... Of the more primitive inhabitants of the land the Rig-Veda teaches us little, except that they were a pastoral people possessing large herds of cattle and having as defences numerous strong-holds."†

What the Professor says in the last sentence is conclusive that whatever he said was pure guesswork so far as it relates to the earlier period. It is far better to rely on Epic literature than Vedic literature for the source of the ancient civilisation and great Western scholars like Professor Max Muller admitted it. The importance of the Indian Epics cannot be gainsaid. The three Vedas are directly dependent on the Rig Veda. The Bharata Samhita, as far as can be deduced from the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata, is the work of the great sage Kapila (*vide* Go-Kapilya dialogue). Even now men of all classes pay tribute to the memory of the great man and consider themselves immune from all sins by bathing at the estuary of the Ganges. The heroes of the Epics did so. It is the best proof that the source of civilisation cannot be anywhere else than where the greatest philosopher lived and gave lectures to his disciples. Time has obliterated the place which was over the centre of early civilisation. The formation of the delta of Bengal was perhaps referred to in the great Epic as the building of Jamby Island.

*Professor E. J. Rapson's "Ancient India", pages 40-41.

†Professor E. J. Rapson's "Ancient India", pages 41—46.

Benares became the centre of culture after the displacement of the seat of Kapila. It might be the work of time or that of his enemies. Vyasa composed his work in Badrikasrama, which was the second edition of the Bharata Samhita with his siksha to his son Suka modifying the views of Kapila. But the Mahabharata was made when Vyasa adopted the priesthood to the kings of Kurus, whose line he revived by the performance of sacrifices in the way Sagara's line was revived by Kapila when Bhagiratha propitiated him with his good conduct and piety. Madri's burning of herself in the funeral pyre of king Pandu, bespeaks a later age than that of Pandu. If that really was the custom of the Kuru family or of the Kshatriya race at that time, it would have been followed after the great battle of Kurukshettra by the widows of the fallen warriors. This has not attracted the attention of the critics of the Epic before. Madri's marriage with Pandu is a myth and seems to be the creation of the dramatic Mahabharata and nothing else.

The original Epics are the real source of ancient civilisation. It is for this that the original Epics must be found and all pains for this have been undertaken after lifelong study. It is a hard task full of difficulties. Success depends upon an unbiassed close study of facts and a knowledge of Epic literature in relation to the Sanskrit literature of Ancient India from the time of the Vedas till now.

RELIGION.

The history of religion consists of two prominent elements, religious ideas and acts. Dogma and ritual are not religion. They are only its necessary manifestations. Everything is belief in which the doctrinal, ritualistic or ethical elements are balanced. One cannot get an insight into a faith without studying the doctrine which prompts peculiar rites and acts. That depends on a study of the mythical and dogmatical conceptions, and ethical institutions where they took definite shape. It was thus that the Epic which becomes the medium of comparative theology in its widest sense, was called the Mahabharata and the fifth Veda of the Hindus, the best of all the sacred books. Its religion is characterised by sacred rites and institutions, which speak of the highest phases of ethical principles with their developments. The great Epic lifted the veil which for many centuries hid from the general public knowledge of the essence of the sacred writings of the Vedas.

The development of society is traced usually in a purely historical spirit which does not bring within its scope the crude questions of philosophy. Ethics and politics, though separate, are not absolutely so if carefully observed, for states or organisations are of different forms and are judged in relation to the individual and general freedom of a country or a nation. The Indian Epic characters delineate the play of cultured interests with the stable objectivity of law in terms of the abiding consciousness of the greater whole in which the world moves and has its being. Historically it may be said in an intelligent sense to explain the higher by showing its genesis from the lower; but in philosophy it is just the reverse, the lower is explained by the higher. Philosophy deals with the imminent laws of creation which have hardly any connection with or bearing on the characters of any Epic; yet it is sought to be proved by a cultured Indian student that the story of the Mahabharata is nothing but a conflict of all the six systems of Indian philosophy.

Apart from the common motives of acquiring religious merit or expiating sins, Indian shrines are frequented even now more for the performance of Sradh ceremonies in honour of deceased ancestors or for carrying the ashes of the dead to be thrown in the waters of some sacred river or to entomb them in a sacred place with a view to preserve the sacred memory in the sacred place. Before the Brahmanical revival in India, which almost drove Buddhism out of India,

the Buddhist converts of China used to visit the chief scenes of the great man's birth, death and activities of life in Kapilvastu, Kasinagar and Benares, respectively. The Chinese travellers Fa-Hain, Hwai-Sang, Singyan and Huen Tsang came to visit the pilgrimages and collect sacred books. A rational nature admits of nothing but what is serviceable to mankind. There is divinity that stirs humanity. The Hindu Puranas speak of pilgrimages connected with the Pandavas and the Epics testify to the same.

Till now no cogent reasons have been advanced to prove that the principal figures in the Mahabharata were not actual characters in history. The negative argument advanced by scholars is not convincing. The theory that the Pandavas were mythical heroes may be fascinating, but how can one brush aside the remains of the palaces and buildings of the Pandavas in the happy valley of Kashmir?

"The ground about it was then occupied by the original city of Srinagar, the modern name of Pandrathan being a corruption of the Sanskrit Puranadhisthana, *i. e.* 'the old capital'. Dr. Elmslie, however, supposes the name to be derived from Pandy and Durendun, the father of the Pandus. The seat of government had been transferred to the present site by king Pravarasena II nearly 500 years before the foundation of this temple; but the old city was not entirely deserted until its destruction by fire in the reign of Abhimanyu, about the year A. D. 960...Martand lies on the Karewa above Islamabad, and is easily reached from Islamabad, Bawan and Achabal. 'The ruins of the Hindu temple of Martand, or, as it is commonly called, the Pandu-Kuru, or the house of the Pandus and Kurus—the cyclops of the East—are situated on the highest part of a Karewa, where it commences to rise to its juncture with the mountains, about 3 miles east of Islamabad. Occupying, undoubtedly, the finest position in Kashmir this noble ruin is the most striking in size and situation of all the existing remains of Kashmir grandeur. The temple itself is not now more than 40 feet in height, but its solid walls and bold outlines, towering over the fluted pillars of the surrounding colonnade, give it a most imposing appearance. There are no petty confused details, but all are distinct and massive, and most admirably suited to the general character of the building. Many vain speculations have been hazarded regarding the date of erection of this temple, and the worship to which it was appropriated. It is usually called the House of the Pandus by the Brahmins, and by the people 'Martand', or the sun, to which the temple was dedicated. They are entirely composed of a blue limestone, which is capable of taking the highest polish, a property to which I mainly attribute the present beautiful state of preservation of most of the Kashmirian buildings! Not one of these temples has a name excepting that of Martand, which is called in the corrupt Kashmirian pronunciation, Matan, but they are all known by the general name of Pandavanki lari or 'Pandus-house', a title to which they have no claim whatever, unless indeed the statement of Ptolemy can be considered of sufficient authority upon such a subject. He says 'circa autem Bidaspum Pandevorum regio'—the kingdom of the Pandus is upon the Betasta or (Behat) that is, it corresponded with Kashmir. This passage would seem to prove that the Pandavas still inhabited Kashmir so late as the second century of our era. Granting the correctness of this point there may be some truth in the universal attribution of the Kashmirian temples to the race of Pandus, for some of these buildings date as high as the end of the fifth century, and there

are others that must undoubtedly be much more ancient, perhaps even as old as the beginning of the Christian era. One of them dates from 220 B. C." *

The Mahabharata begins with snake worship and the ancient religion of Kashmir coincides with it.

"The religion in Kashmir has in like manner been Hindu from a very remote date. Originally, no doubt, it was Ophite or snake-worship. but this is part of the Hindu ritual, and the Nagas are included in the orthodox pantheon. The adoration of Siva was soon engrafted upon this, even if the two rites were not originally identified. We have frequent occasions to notice the important figure which snakes and snake deities make in the worship and traditionary history of Kashmir. The extent and permanence of the superstition we may learn from Abul Fazal, who observes that in seven hundred places there are carved figures of snakes which they worship (An Essay on the Hindu History of Kashmir, by H. H. Wilson)"†.

Even now the longevity of the people of Kashmir is remarkable.

"Gandhara thus forms a most important link connecting India with the West; and it holds a unique position among all the countries of India from the fact that its history may be traced with remarkable continuity from the times of the Rig Veda even down to the present day. Its inhabitants, the Gandharis, are mentioned both in the Rig Veda and the Atharva Veda; and Gandhara appears among the countries of India in Sanskrit literature from the period of the Upanishads onwards, in the earliest Buddhist literature, and in the most Ancient Indian inscriptions. It remained a Persian province for about two centuries; and, after the downfall of the Empire in 331 B.C., it, together with the Persian province of 'India' or 'the country of the Indus' which had been added to the Empire by Darius not long after 516 B.C., came under the sway of Alexander the Great. Through Gandhara and the Indian province was exercised the Persian influence, which so greatly modified the civilisation of North-Western India."‡

The Mahabharata has more historical and geographical backgrounds than the Ramayana to demonstrate the expansion of civilisation and religion, if not philosophy, in India. It did not preserve the line of kings with events like Rajatarangini. The Western theory of the home of early civilisation being outside India is Utopian, as civilisation is spread either by conquest or by trade. Indian trade dates back to more than 2000 B. C. The products and manufactures were distributed in India through navigation more than any other means of transport. The well-known King Solomon changed the name of the hill Sandhiman to Suliman.§ This establishes the Hindu occupation before the reign of Solomon.

Religion and history are found combined in the Hindu Puranas and the great incident which is said to have led to the first ill-feeling between the step brothers, the Asuras and the Devas, was the unjust distribution of the Ambrosia churned out of the sea. The mountain Mandar was

* Professor Walter R. Lawrence's "The Valley of Kashmir" pages 174, 170 and 165.
† Professor Walter R. Lawrence's "The Valley of Kashmir," page 299 (foot-note).
‡ Professor E. J. Rapson's "Ancient India," pages 81-82.
§ Professor Walter R. Lawrence's "The Valley of Kashmir," page 298.

the staff used in the churning and the Basuki was the cord round it. The Mandar mountain is the Parasanath hill in Bihar, in the old province of Bengal. The great Kapila, founder of Samkhya philosophy, excluded Bengal from Aryabarta.

"The following Kshatriya castes, through the extinction (non-performance) of their proper religious rites and on account of not seeing (*i.e.*, in the absence of their contact with) Brahmanas, have been degraded to the Sudra caste in this world. (43)"*

This is often wrongly referred to Bengal, etc., but it should be read with the III Chapter of the Manu Samhita, verses 14—16. The report of 1887 of the Archæological Survey of Bengal says:—

"Mandar is mentioned in the Mahabharata, not only in connection with the churning of the Ocean. In the Varaha Purana it is particularised as a place of pilgrimage: A deep tank is mentioned at its foot to the south, as also one on the summit, as also the Sapta-dhara and the Pancha-dhara at its foot, there is mention also of a cave on its west side, which I could neither see nor hear of: it is also mentioned in Nepalese Buddhist literature, (Rajendra's Nepalese Literature) in a manner, showing, that in Asoka's time, it was the seat of learned Jainas, and incidentally, the passage bears out, in a remarkable manner, Ed. Thomas' supposition, that Asoka professed the Jaina religion, at least in the earlier part of his reign, after his conversion from Brahmanism.

"Objects Nos. 12, 13 and 14 are at Kahalgaon. Kahalgaon, which is noticed in much detail by Cunningham (Vol. XV) appears to me to be the place of Sacred Tirath mentioned in the Mahabharata (the rock-cut Temple, object No. 13, is mentioned by Hiouen Thsang) And the form and sculpture of the rock-cut Temple would place it in the earlier Gupta period, consequently the place where it stands must early have been a place of religious worship. It is still a place of worship, not only to the Muhammadans, who have a Darga (object No. 14) on the level platform higher up, on that same Island, but by the lower class Hindus, who make offerings to the twin divinities Haji and Hajman, who are supposed to reside on, or in, the larger and the smaller rock in the river, at that place.

"As the Mahabharata distinctly mentions one Sacred bathing place in Champa, and I am not aware of any other sacred place in the river, (for Jahangira, the only other possible place, has been shown to have become so subsequent to the Mahabharata and even to Hiouen Thsang) I have no option but to identify this place, which was certainly a place of some sanctity at the time of the Guptas, has been so all along, and is so now, (as attested by the offerings made to Haji and Hajman and the Pir's Dargah) with the Tirtha of Champa; and in that case I would identify the Gangal Dei Hill, with a temple on the top, a little to the East of Kahalgaon, (presently to be noticed) with the Dandaparna mentioned in the extracts from the Mahabharata. .... particularly allude to the vast lake-like expanse in which the river Ganges is as it were lost here, because I conceive it was here and not at Jahangira, that the holy spot was, where Jahnu-muni performed austerities; and this may also be the vast and holy lake into which the Ganges is said to flow in the Mahabharata:—but this is pure speculation. About 5 miles downstream from Kahalgaon is Patharghatta, object No. 15 of the Bengal list. The place is noticed by various travellers, but Bishop Heber is the only one who gives some description of the remains there. (Vol. I, pages 264 to 268)."

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* The Manu Samhita, Chapter 10, verse 8.

The historian Mr. R. Montgomery Martin, in his "Indian Empire," mentions that the dress of the people of Bengal was the ancient form of that of the Aryans as described by Arrian.

"The dress, as described by Arrian, was precisely the two wrappers of cotton cloth, still worn by the people of Bengal and by strict Brahmins everywhere."*

Further he makes an interesting allusion to the kings of Orissa, *e.g*, Yajati Kesari and Ganga and Surjya Vamsa.

"The history of Orissa, like all others in the Deccan, begins with princes mentioned in the Mahabharata, describes in a very confused manner the successive occupation of the country by Vicramaditya and Salivahana, and the repeated invasions of Yavans from Delhi, from a country called Babul (supposed to mean Persia), from Cashmere and from Sinde, between the sixth century before, and the fourth after Christ."

He also thinks that the Epic is an important source of history of Ancient India.

"Our present information divides itself into two classes; and comes either through the channel of poetry, that is, of history travestied into fable; or else through the medium of Brahmin or Buddhist priests: it must consequently be well searched and sifted before it can be relied on as unbiassed by political motive or sectarian prejudice."†

The learned Vincent Smith says :—

"The political history of India begins for an orthodox Hindu more than three thousand years before the Christian era with the famous war waged on the banks of the Jumna, between the sons of Kuru and the sons of Pandu, as related in the vast Epic known as the Mahabharata. (The epoch of the Kaliyoga, 3102 B.C., is usually identified with the era of Yudhisthira, and the date of the Mahabharata war). But certain astronomers date the war more than six centuries later (Cunningham, Indian Eras, pp. 6-13). See Fleet, J. R. A. S., 1911, p. 675; and R. Shamasastry, Gavam Ayana (Mysore, 1908). But the modern critic fails to find sober history in bardic tales, and is constrained to travel down the stream of time much farther before he comes to an anchorage of solid fact. In order to be available for the purpose of history, events must be susceptible of arrangement in definite chronological order, and capable of being dated approximately, if not exactly. Facts to which dates cannot be assigned, although they may be invaluable for the purpose of ethnology, philology, and other sciences, are of no use to the historian."‡

Philosophy is a branch of Hindu religion as the problems of practical questions of spiritual life naturally raise the questions of self-discipline, sacrifice, charity and the contemplation of God. Besides, the compatability of evil with the goodness of God and the unequal distribution of joy and misery in life are the intellectual problems of religion. The fact is that the development of mind and spirit is traced in the theory of creation. From the early period of Vedas and Brahmanas the spirit of God, manifested in the stupendous phenomena of visible creation, was represented by seven apostles. Those the world feared and admired

* Mr. R. Montgomery Martin's "Indian Empire," page 47.
† Mr. R. Montgomery Martin's "Indian Empire," page 48.
‡ Mr. V. A. Smith's "Early History of India." page 28 with note.

became heroes, till at last what they reasoned became God absolute, Narayana. Thus Ancient India constructed a system of belief and worship for the general body of men according to their abilities and culture. There were seven schools of philosophy, Samkhya, Yoga, Vedanta, Naya, Vaiceshika and Charvaka by Kapila, Patanjali, Vyasa, Goutama, Kanada and Charvaka, respectively. The last, Charvaka, being the conventional Epicurean theory, is not considered worthy of being called a philosophy in the Higher Hindu school of thought. He was killed after the Great War of Kurukshettra and was the reputed adviser of Durjodhana.

The main aim of the great Epic seems to be that the ideal monarchs of self-restraint, like Sudershana and Yudhisthira, ascended to Heaven in person as the great sages Narada and others did in days of yore. The emancipation of the soul was not then a question of a chain of births dependent on the merits of works or its absorption into the primordial essence of the Universe. For the cultured class the literature of Ancient India came into being. Vedic language was found unsuitable for the advancement of general culture and knowledge, and the perfected speech "Sanskrit" in poetry was thought to be the most convenient for learning the lessons by heart.

Valmiki is said to have been the pioneer in this respect, and he taught young children first to recite his compositions to musical accompaniments, thus attracting the admiration of the assembly, for the learned discourses of the educated and cultured sages could not be understood or be attractive. The dry subjects of philosophy, with which the great Epic Mahabharata dealt in the midst of other things, were found not so interesting to the mass as the Kavya form of literature with the amusing deeds of Hanuman to enliven the assembly by showing the wonderful possibilities of beastly power when combined with divinity. The Jatras of Bengal, even up to the last decade, observed this to amuse the audience in the pantomine of Hanuman.

The Vedic poets were astrologers and astronomers, as the observation of their sacrifices depended on the phases of the moon. In the Taittiriya Aranyaka of Vyasa mention of the planets is made for the first time. The laws of Manu were silent about them, but their worship is included in the later code of Yajnavalkya. These were at first seven with the seven sages, but became nine in consonance with the digits of mathemathics. It is admitted that the development of Algebra, Arithmetic and Astronomy owed their origin to Ancient India. Medical science was much respected and was ranked with the Vedas as Upveda or a supplementary revelation under the tables of Ayurveda. The Epic Mahabharata, treating as it does with everything worth knowing, was

respected more than the Vedas. This is what the table of contents of the Epic meant when it said that it would outweigh all the Vedas put together when weighed in the scale. Sir William Hunter says :—

"The works of the great traditional Indian physicians, Charaka and Susruta, were translated into Arabic not later than the 8th century."* "Both appear as Brahmans; Susruta being, according to tradition, the son of the sage Viswamitra; and Charaka, of another 'Veda-learned Muni'†..." Unlike the astronomical treatises of the Brahmans, the Hindu Medical Works never refer to the Yavanas, or Greeks, as authorities; and, with one doubtful exception, they contain no names which point to a foreign origin. The chief seat of the science was at Benares, far to the east of Greek influence in India. Indeed, Indian pharmacy employed the weights and measures of Provinces still farther to the south east, namely, Magadha and Kalinga. Arabic medicine was founded on the translations from the Sanskrit treatises, made by command of the Kaliphs of Bagdad, 750-960 A.D. European medicine, down to the 17th Century, was based upon the Arabic; and the name of the Indian physician Charaka repeatedly occurs in the Latin translations of Avicenna (Ibn Sina), Rhazes (Al Rasi), and Serapion (Ibn Serabi). Indian medicine dealt with the whole area of the science. It described the structure of the body, its organs, ligaments, muscles, vessels and tissues. The Materia Medica of the Hindus embraces a vast collection of drugs belonging to the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, many of which have been adopted by European physicians. Their pharmacy contained ingenious processes of preparation, with elaborate directions for the administration and classification of medicines. Much attention was devoted to hygiene, to the regimen of the body, and to diet.

"The surgery of the Ancient Indian physicians appears to have been bold and skilful. They conducted amputations, arresting the bleeding by pressure, a cup-shaped bandage, and boiling oil. They practised lithotomy, performed operations in the abdomen and uterus; cured hernia, fistula, piles; set broken bones and dislocations; and were dexterous in the extraction of foreign substances from the body. A special branch of surgery was devoted to rhinoplasty, or operations for improving deformed ears and noses, and forming new ones; a useful operation in a country where mutilation formed part of the judicial system, and one which European surgeons have borrowed. It is practised with much success in the Residency Hospital at Indore, Holkar's capital; as jealous husbands in Native States still resort, in spite of more humane laws, to their ancient remedy against a suspected or unfaithful wife. This consists in throwing the woman violently down on the ground and slashing off her nose. I have seen a woman in hospital under the process of new nose-making, and other successful examples of the operation when completed."‡

Ancient India gave ample scope for the discovery of arts and their advancement. The colonisation by the Pandavas of a region full of forest and unfit for human habitation proves that. Alexander was very unhappy as he could not induce his soldiers to conquer Bengal, which was the centre of Indian trade with the world. The importance of the provinces of Bengal and Behar and Orissa has been shown. The Survey report of Bengal is quoted and it will be interesting to show

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* Sir W.W. Hunter's "The Indian Empire", page 149.

† Sir W.W. Hunter's "The Indian Empire", page 131.

‡ Sir William W. Hunter's "The Indian Empire", pages 149-150.

how the aboriginal race of India were displaced from Bengal and lived in Khandaba Prastha, and when they were displaced by the Landavas, went to the North-West Frontier, where Alexander found them, and elsewhere.

"Starting from the West, Alexander the Great found Rawal Pindi District in the hands of the Takkas or Takshaks, from whom its Greek name of Taxila was derived. This people has been traced to a Scythian migration about the 6th century B.C, (such dates have no pretension to be anything more than intelligent conjectures based on very inadequate evidence. With regard to the Takshaks, see Colonel Tod and the authorities which he quotes, Rajasthan, Vol. i. p. 53 passim, pp. 93 *et seq.* (Madras Reprint, 1873.) Their settlements in the 4th century B.C. seem to have extended from the Paropamisan range (where Alexander found them as the Parae-Takæ-pahari or Hill Takae (?).) in Afghanistan to deep into Northern India. Their Panjab Capital, Takshasila, or Taxila, was the largest city which Alexander met with between the Indus and the *Jhelum* (327 B.C.). (Arrian. The Brahman mythologists, of course, produce an Aryan pedigree for so important a person as King Taksha, and make him the son of Bharata and nephew of Ram Chandra). Salihavana, from whom the Saka or Scythian era took its commencement (78 A.D.), is held by some authorities to have been of Takshak descent. (Tod, Rajasthan, Vol. i. p. 95 (ed. 1873). In the 7th Century A.D , Taki, (Taki, or Asarur, 45 miles West of Lahore. General Cunningham, Anc. Geog. of India, p. 161, and Map vi. (ed. 1871). This Taki lies, however, considerably to the South-East of the Takshasila of Alexander's expedition), perhaps derived from the same race, was the Capital of the Punjab. The Scythic Taskshaks, indeed, are supposed to have been the source of the great Serpent Race, the Takshakas or Nagas, who figure so prominently in Sanskrit literature and art, and whose name is still borne by Naga tribes of our own day. The Takkas remaining to the present time are found only in the Districts of Delhi and Karnal. They number about 15,000, of whom three-fourths have adopted the faith of Islam.

"The words Naga and Takshaka in Sanskrit both mean a 'snake', or tailed monster. As the Takshakas have been questionably connected with the Scythian Takkas, so the Nagas have been derived, by conjecture in the absence of evidence, from the Tartar patriarch Nagas, the second son of Elkhan (Tod, Rajasthan, Vol. i. p. 53 (ed. 1873); a very doubtful authority). Both the terms, Nagas and Takshakas, seem to have been loosely applied by the Sanskrit writers to a variety of non-Aryan peoples in India, whose religion was of an anti-Aryan type. We learn, for example, how the five Pandava bretheren of the Mahabharata burned out the Snake-king Takshaka from his primeval Khandava Forest. The Takshakas and Nagas were the Tree and Serpent worshippers, whose rites and objects of adoration have impressed themselves deeply on the architecture and sculpture of India. They probably included in a confused manner, several different races of Scythic origin. The chief authority on Tree and Serpent worship in India selected the term 'Scythian' for the anti-Aryan elements, which entered so largely into the Indian religions both ancient and modern. (Dr. J. Fergusson's Tree and Serpent Worship, pp. 71, 72 (India Museum. 410, 1868). For the results of more recent local research, see Mr. Rivett-Carnac's papers in the Journal of the As. Soc., Bengal. 'The Snake Symbol in India', 'Ancient Sculpturings on Rocks', 'Stone Carvings at Mainpuri', etc.; the Honourable Rao Sahib Vishvanath Narayan Mandlik's 'Serpent-worship in Western India', and other essays in the Bombay As. Soc. Journal; also, Reports of Archæological Survey, Western India.)"*

*Sir William W. Hunter's "Indian Empire", pages 282-283 with notes.

The Mahabharata mentions Takshasila as the capital of Janmejoya. It is evident from this that the colonisation took place from Indraprastha (Delhi) to Takshasila. The great Epic and archæological and other surveys testify to this. European scholarship has traced it differently. The amorphous growth of colonisation is not only a very important question of migration, but has a great bearing on the question of the home of the ancient Hindus, where the Vedas developed and grew and trade flourished. If the Aryan race had entered India from the Himalayas then that would have been the trade route, but it was not. The home of shipbuilding was Bengal, and the ships of Bengal were famous from time immemorial, and the Europeans and other traders came to Satgong for trade before the first century of Christ. The birthplace of Vyasa is said to be in an island and for that his name is Dvaipayana. He was of black complexion and that was why another adjective was added, so he was called Krishna Dvaipayana and there is a shrine in the island famous for the birth of the great author Vyasa, 263 miles from Calcutta. Every Bengali Almanac gives the description of the place, *i.e.*, the island is surrounded by three rivers Brahmana, Samkhya and Koel, 5 miles from the B. N. Railway Station, Rowkela.

The Bengali almanac more than the other Indian almanacs, is following the old Hindu system of giving all necessary information within a brief compass, not only about the daily chart of the dispositions of constellations and planets to help the observance of daily and periodical worship, but all necessary information for pilgrimages to sacred shrines for acquiring religious merit. There not only the birthplace of Vyasa is given but also several shrines in the Himalayas are mentioned where Vyasa performed religious austerities. Patanjal is said to have performed his Yoga austerities in a village of Patan, ten miles north of Memari station in the district of Burdwan in Bengal, and people worship a Siva named after him. There is also an image of Narayan in a village called Pandu-Kesava, twelve miles from Badarikasrama. It is said to have been brought by Arjuna from Heaven and established there. Eleven miles from Cawnpore a Siva bearing the name of Valmiki is worshipped, and the place of Valmiki's residence is ascribed to a hill in Jhansi, Manikpur Branch Line of the G. I. P. Railway, 5 miles north of Bahilpur station.

There is a Vyasa cave in a mountain two miles from Bilaspur station, from which there was a tunnel to the place of residence of Markendaya, a sage, seven miles from it. This is now closed up with a stone. The place of residence of the illustrious royal sage Visvamitra is a place called Chantravala (power of morality) near Buxar station, where a Siva called Ramesvar was worshipped. Kapila performed

religious austerities in Haridwar, named after him. The birthplace of Sita is ascribed to Janakpura, within 60 miles of Mokameh station. In Monghyr there is the famous Sitakunda, whose mineral water is sold far and wide, and near it the famous king Jarasandha is lying. Rishyasringa's place of residence is in Bhagulpore, a few miles from Mokameh Ghat station. The famous Karna's place is ascribed to Karnagarh, in Midnapore, Bengal, where the ruins of a big temple are lying. The birthplace of the sage Kasyapa and that of the progenitor of the Solar line are said to be at different places in Kashmir. There is a Khandaba Forest in the Bombay Presidency 196 miles from Jubbulpore where small temples are found.

Traditions in the sacred shrines establish, to a great extent, the missing links of the ancient history of India. Bengal and Kashmir seemed to be the north and south poles of ancient civilisation. Those who followed the path of absolute renunciation went from Bengal and Behar to the Himalayas to practise religious austerities. Bengal and Behar may claim justly to be regarded as the most ancient centre of civilisation, where independence of thought and action was allowed, for from that place many great men were born like Vyasa, Budha, Gourangya and Kalidasa.

In those days the Brahmans could not be punished and tyrants could do anything they liked. What cannot be cured must be endured, was the ruling maxim. Bengal stood against it and the institutes of Manu and Yajnavalkya looked down upon such a country and the Brahmans were at the root of it, as Bengal had the moral courage to disown them. Raghunandan and Gauranga established the predominence of Bengal in the religious world and the Naya philosophy of Navadwipa governed the other schools and soon became so famous that students from all parts of India flocked there. At Benares, the ancient seat of learning, Bengalis usurped the Naya seat and are there even now. The black Bengali Vyasa or Krishna Dwaipayana, became Padarayana Vyasa at Badrikasrama. He too established his place of residence at Benares and established the image Adikesava, but the evil inclination due to Kali-Juga predominated in the end. The place where he resided was called Vyasa-Kasi, the abhorred place of the Saivas.

There was no custom in civilised India which could permit of the curious situation of five husbands to one wife or the Niyoga system in the first three castes of the Indo Aryan family. Briggs in the introduction to his translation of Ferishta (p. i x iii) says:—

"Some of the Hindus assert that the tribes of Brahmin and Kshetry (Kshatriya) existed from time immemorial, but that the Rajputs are a modern tribe, only known since the beginning of the Kulyoog (Cali Yuga, A. M. 3215). The rajahs. not satisfied

with their married wives, had frequently children by their female slaves, who, although not legitimate successors to the throne, were styled Rajputs, or the children of the rajahs."*

Yajutsa was the only son of Dhritarastra by a Vaisya wife, who survived the Great War and went over to the side of the Pandavas before the war, and Dasratha too had a son by a Vaisya wife. It is evident the inter-marriages between Kshatriya and Vaisya gave the children the name of Kshetry in India for they combined in them trading faculties with legitimate ambitions of easy, princely habits of life and enjoyment. The quotations of independent European Historians of note prove beyond doubt the important connection of the Indian Epics with Bengal, Behar and Orissa in the past. The Mahabharata furnishes important links and close relationship with the king of Kalinga. Chitrangada, king of Kalinga, must have been a powerful Kshatriya, whose daughter was won by Karna for Durjodhana at the Svayambara ceremony of marriage.†

"According to the Mahavamsa, the mother of Vijaya, the conqueror of Ceylon, was a princess of Bengal, but her mother was a princess of Kalinga, whence she had been banished on account of her immorality and went with a caravan of merchants, going to Magadha. On the way, while going through the country of Ladha (Modern Radha or Western Bengal) the party was scattered by the attack of a lion which captured the princess and became the father of Simhabahu or Sihabahu, the father of Vijaya. This Simhabahu was permitted, for killing his father, *i. e.*, the lion, to clear the forest and found the kingdom of Northern Kalinga, the capital of which was Simhapura. It is quite probable that the village of Singur in the Hooghly district of South-Western Bengal is identical with Simhapura, the new capital of Northern Kalinga".‡

In the great battle the army of Kalinga followed the lead of Bhagadatta, king of Kamrupa, and in the famous formation of Drona, which cost Abhimanyu's life, the said army was placed at its neck. Srutayas, the king of Kalinga, was said to have protected Jayadratha from the attacks of Bhima and Arjuna. Jarasandha was a well-known and powerful king of the Mahabharata. Buchanan's Statistics, Vol. II, furnish important clues to the places of the Epic occurrances:—

'Major Wilford says that Sagala is another ancient name of Mungger; but I do not know on what authority, and such of the Pandits, as well as vulgar of the place, as I have consulted, are totally ignorant of the name. The remain of antiquity, which according to tradition goes farthest back, is on a hill called Nauyagarhi, south-east about four miles from Mungger. It is said to have been the prison where Jarasandha, king of Magadha, had confined 80,000 of the princes of India, whom in pursuit of universal monarchy he had taken prisoners, and intended to sacrifice to the gods; but fortunately he was killed by Bhim, the brother of Yudhisthira, who afterwards contested the sovereignty of India with his kinsman Duryyodhana".§ "Major Wilford seems to have been able to find some authority, for considering Rajmahal as a

* Mr. R. Montgomery Martin's "The Indian Empire" page 42 (footnote).

† The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva. Chapter IV.

‡ R. D. Banerjee's "History of Orissa," Vol. I, page 49.

§ Buchanan's Statistics, pages 45-46, Vol. II.

place of note in great antiquity, and says, (Asiatick Researches, Vol. 9, page 34) that Balaram, the brother of Krishna, after his wars with Banasur, whose residence is still shown near Puraniya, (Purneah) built Rajagriha or Rajamahal, on the banks of the Ganges, which must not be confounded with Patna, the Rajagriha of Jarasandha. I presume, therefore that Major Wilford means our Rajmahal, which in fact is at no great distance from the city of Banasur, that I have described in my account of Dinajpur; and near Puraniya I have not been able to trace any work attributed to that hero"*..."Where Major Rennell places Phatuka, is Shumushpur Jafurabad, a town with 300 houses, and some considerable religious edifices. It may be considered as a suburb of Phatuha. Baikunthapur is a town at least as large as Phatuha, but has not so many good houses, is rather in a state of decay, and is chiefly inhabited by weavers. Baikanthapur is a remarkable place of worship. The mother of Man Singha died at this place, and, where she was burned, a Baradwari, or Hall with 12 doors, was built by her son, and several temples were at the same time endowed. On this occasion the Governor was favoured with a dream, in which he was informed of the place in the river, where Jarasandha had one day thrown an amulet (Yantra), that he usually wore on his arm, and such dreams being always true, the amulet was found. It is a stone representing a Lingga adorned with four human heads. It is alleged, that at the Sivaratri 200,000 people assemble."†

"The most remarkable place of Hindu worship is in a small marshy lake at the old seat of the Tharus called Gurgang. It is said to be mentioned in the Ramayana of Valmiki, that Dasarath, the father of Rama, while lying in wait for game near a river, shot Sravan, the son of Andhak Muni, mistaking him for a deer or wild beast. Andhak, although a Muni passing his time in silent contemplation of divine things, was of low degree; but being very holy, and withal rather irascible, he cursed the king of Ayodhya, who had killed his son, and in consequence Rama and Lakshman, the king's sons, passed 14 years in the woods, where they had many troubles. About 10 years ago it was somehow discovered, that in the Tharus' old lake, called Gandar Jhil in the vulgar language, there is a deep pool, and that it was there that Dasarath killed Sravan. It has also been discovered, that this had been the place where Gandharba, another silent contemplator, was wont to pray. On these accounts about 500 people assemble to bathe in the pool on the new moon in Magh. The claim to Gandharba Muni may be very good; but in the legend of Valmiki, there is a strong circumstance mentioned against this being the place where Sravan was killed; for it is there stated, that the unfortunate affair took place on the Tamasa, a river, which passes Azemgar, and is called Tangus (Tonse River) in the language of men."‡

"The Raja of Mahauli says that he is of the same family with the Jayanagar Raja, descended of Bharata, the brother of Ramachandra. This prince, after Rama assumed the Government of Ayodhya, went to assist Yuddhajit, his mother's brother, king of Kekaya against the Gandharbas, who had invaded the country. Having expelled these, he built two cities, of which one was Srinagar, and left there his two sons, Taksha and Puskal. According to the Desmala of the Saktisanggam Tantra, Kekaya is situated between the Brahmaputra River and Kamrup, that is to say, it is the country we call Bhootan; which, in Sangakrita, is otherwise called Salya; but I am told, that Valmiki considers Kekaya as the same with Kasmira. However such discordancies may be reconciled, many pretend that Srinagar, near the source of the Ganges, is the city built by Bharata, and that the Suryabangsis of Mahauli, came from Kumau, in that vicinity."

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* Buchanan's Statistics Vol. II, page 67.

† Buchanan's Statistics, pages 44-45, Vol. I.

‡ Buchanan's Statistics, p. 386, Vol. II.

The origin of the name of Magadha, as given in the Purans, bears out the significant fact in the Astika Parva of the Mahabharata that Garuda disgorged a Brahman and his Sudra wife.

"In the Ayodhyakanda, of the Skandha Puran, although supposed to have been written by Vyas, who also composed the Samba-Puran, a totally different account is given. It is there stated that Dasaratha Raja, the father of Rama, who flourished in the silver age (Tretyug) many thousand centuries before Samba, brought these Brahmans from Sakadwip to a great feast, where many Munis and persons of the sacred order were assembled. After the feast, the Brahmans of Saka were loaded with presents and sent home. This same book mentions that a certain Gaya, who had been king of the whole world within the seas for 6,000 years, gave great offence to Suryya, by applying to the Brahmans who studied the Vedas, and for neglecting the Brahmans of Suryya. On this account the king and all his Brahmanas were afflicted with the leprosy and were told by Suryya, that they could only be cured by drinking the water in which his Brahmans, the Sakadwipis, had washed their feet. On this account, the king and his Brahmans went to the banks of the milky sea, and were cured. Krishna afterwards brought 18 families into Jambudwip, in order to cure his son Samba of the leprosy. When the cure had been performed, these Brahmanas, called Magas, wished to return to their own country; but Krishna, Narad and others were very desirous for them to stay, and having persuaded them, Krishna prayed to the Magas and sent them to Magadha, to which they were conducted by Samba, and placed at Sambakhyagram, north from Giribraja (Giriyak), where he resided. Although Samba thus lived close to the capital of the Brihadrathas, then the chief kings of India, he is said in this book to have been the great king; but there is still another circumstance more troublesome to reconcile with anything like history.' *

There are thirty Kashmiri learned Brahmanas families in Behar quite distinct from the other Brahmanas.† Uparichara Basu, the ancestor of the famous king Jarasandha, with whom the story of the great Epic begins, lived in Magadha (pp. 29 "Martin's Eastern India", Vol. I). The place Ekchackra is identified with Arah.

"The name Arah is said by the Pandits of the place to be properly Ara, and to be a corruption of Aranya, which in the Sangskrita signifies a waste. This name was given by the five sons of Pandu, the place then being a forest, where they performed several great works. In particular the Pandits allege, that it was here where the five brothers married Draupadi. Such marriages are now totally illegal, nor could any one of these chiefs have now married this lady, as she was of the same family with themselves in the male line. This is only curious as it shows that the Hindu Law has in modern times undergone great changes in other matters, as well as in the introduction of caste. It must be, however, observed, that this custom of several brothers having a common wife is still very prevalent among the Buddhists of Tibet. The Pandit of the survey doubts very much of Ara having been the scene of this marriage, and the derivation of the name from the Sangskrita seems exceedingly doubtful. In Persian the name is written Arah. The place is said to be also called Ekachakra, implying the people to live in unanimity, a virtue for which at present they have by no means the credit.‡

* Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), page 150, Vol. I.

† Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), page 156, Vol. I.

‡ Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), page 413, Vol. I.

"The principal remain of antiquity in this division is Rautasgar, which as I have said, derives its name from the young prince Rohitaswa, the son of Harischandra, a king of the family of the sun in the most remote periods of Hindu legend. Whether or not Rohitaswa resided there, may be doubted; but his image, there can be little doubt, continued to be worshipped in the fortress until destroyed by the zeal of Aurungzeb. Such, at least, is the general tradition, and all the circumstances are highly probable.' *

"Among the orthodox Hindus, Buddha is not considered as synonymous with Bhagawan a deity, or Muni a saint, but is always talked of as one personage, an incarnation of Vishnu, and in an inscription found at Buddha-Gaya, of which a translation has been published in the Asiatick Researches (Vol. I, p. 284), this is fully stated. It is there mentioned by the author of the inscription that Buddha, the incarnation of a part of Vishnu, and the same with Hari, appeared at the commencement of the Kaliyug in a wild and dreadful forest, and that Amar, one of the nine Jewels of the Court of Vikramaditya, having discovered this place of the supreme being in the forest, caused an image to be made, and a holy temple to be constructed, and therein were set up the divine foot of Vishnu, the images of the Pandus, of Brahma, and the rest of the divinities. This place, according to the inscription, is called Buddha-Gaya, and the fore-fathers of him, who shall perform the ceremony of the Sraddba at this place, shall obtain salvation, as is mentioned in the Vayu-Puran."†

Gaya is one of the oldest and the most respected shrines of Hindus in India. It is held in very great esteem by literate and illiterate alike, even now.

"The chief place of worship among the Hindus is on the Pangchane river, where it passes between the hill called Giribraja and the former abode of Jarasandha. About 5,000 people are said to bathe there on the Purnama of Kartik. West from Giriyak, on the south side of the above-mentioned ridge near its centre are five springs, four of them hot, and dedicated to worship. At these springs, on the Tiluga-Sangkranti, from 8 to 10,000 people assemble to bathe, and the Rajagriha Brahmans have the small profits that accrue. These springs are situated in a row parallel to the hill, and are collectively called Tapoban.‡

"It must be observed, that on the west extremity of the hill, towards the plain where Jarasandha is said to have been killed, and from whence three is an opening to what is most peculiarly called Rajagriha, there is a road ascending the hill exactly similar to that at the east end, and I have no doubt, that it reaches this temple, and could have served no other purpose, but as opening a communication with it, although by the natives it is considered as the remains of a fortification. In this I have no doubt, that they are entirely mistaken. The only image that I saw near the temple, was a small one exceedingly decayed, which was found in the bottom of the tank. It represents a four-armed female with a child on her knee.§

"The idea of Jarasandha's house having been seated on the hill Giribraja, so generally believed in the country, seems to derive its origin from a verse in the Bhagwat, which mentions that Krishna, Bhima and Arjun disguised as mendicants went to Giribraja, where was the son of Brihadratha (Jarasandha), and at the time when mendicants were usually admitted, they went into the palace, and saw the king.||

* Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), page 432. Vol. I.

† Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), pages 69-70. Vol. I.

‡ I bid page 78, Vol. I.

§ I bid page 80, Vol. I.

|| I bid page 81, Vol. I.

"There are caves, one of them assigned to the Lomas or Romas, the reciters of the Mahabharata, and the other to Karna, one of the heroes who was said to have practised asceticism (pp. 104 ibid)".

Regarding the colonisation of the different parts of India the European Historian Martin's views will be found interesting:—

"Swayambhuwa, the founder of the kingdom of Vithora, by the whole of what is called the golden age (Satya Yug), preceded Vaiwaswata, the founder of the kingdom of Kosala and the latter was the great grandson of Marichi, while Budha, who founded the adjacent kingdom of Kuru, and reigned at Pratisthan, opposite to Prayag, about the same time with Vaiwaswata whose daughter he married, was the grandson of Atri. I look upon these Brahmadikas, therefore, as the leaders of a colony, which at the end of the golden age, settled in India, and assumed the name of Brahmans, as being farther advanced in the arts than the descendants of Swayambhuwa its more early princes. I look upon it also as probable, that these personages came from Western Asia, introducing with them the Sangskrita language, generally admitted to be radically the same with the Persian dialect, while the languages spoken among all the rude tribes that inhabit the fastnesses of India, and which are probably remains of its ancient tongue, have no sort of analogy to the languages of the west. In the history of Kashmire, preserved by Abul Fazil, Kasyapa, who was the son of Marichi, is said to have introduced the Brahmans (that is, a colony of civilized men) into that country, and the traditions of Behar State, that he there founded a city, of which I was shown some of the remains. These no doubt were of much later date than the time of Kasyapa, although he may have been the founder of the city to which they once belonged. One of the sons of Kasyapa, named Viwaswa, is supposed to be now the deity presiding over the sun, owing probably to his having introduced from Persia the worship of that luminary, and, from flattery, his descendants were usually called the family of the sun (Suryabangsa). His son Vaiwaswata, who, in a former transmigration, had been Satyabrata (perhaps Noah), founded the kingdom of Kosala, long one of the most powerful in India, and built the city of Kosalapuri, or Ayodhya.*

"Buddha was born about 1366 years before Christ, he being the son-in-law of Vaiwaswata, it is probable that this prince may have been born about the year 1399, and we may allow him to have been 33 years old when he founded Ayodhya, and the kingdom of Kosala. In the genealogies may be found several different lists of his successors, who are commonly supposed by Pandits to have succeeded each other from father to son. by right of primogeniture, nor did one prince fail to leave his kingdom to his eldest son for many generations (Asiatic Researches, Vol. 2, p.130). This, however, seems to be a mere supposition taken for granted, because in some of the genealogies the names follow each other without any remark, for the direct line failed in Ambarisha, and went to the descendants of his brother; and Bharata usurped the Government for 14 years from his elder brother Rama". †

Paleolithic implements found in Orissa and the delta of Bengal with the account of Sagar, king of the Solar dynasty, and ancient remains and traditions connected with the Pouranic and Epic accounts, give clear indications that the early ancient home and the Indian colonisation of Aryans took place on the seaside of Bengal and Orissa. The theory of Noah's Ark, and Mandar hill being the churning staff to

* Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), pages 330-331, Vol. II.

† Buchanan's Statistics (Martin's Eastern India), page 331, Vol. II.

skim the ocean to bring out the ambrosia of life bears this out. Bengal has been famous for shipbuilding and trading in India.

The bare outlines of the idol figures of gods like Kali of Kalighat, Jagannath, Subhadra and Balarama of Puri point to the age of the art when it was in its infancy, and there is the well-known tradition and squib at Visvakarma, to whom the workmanship of the wooden figures of Jagannath, etc., are ascribed, and the author's name is identified with the name of the king of heaven, Indra (Indradyumna). The name Indradyumna implies that he has wealth like the king Indra. He was said to have descended from the Solar dynasty of kings. Pouranic account connects Jagannath with Narayana and Narada, and what is more, the very nim tree on whose bough Krishna lost his life by being shot by an arrow, was said to have been curved out for the very first figures of the gods which have been renewed every twelfth year since then. Thus the Epic connection is also established.

The popularity of Puri and its presiding deity, Jagannath, seems to precede the Budhistic age. The disposition of the three gods and their mutual relationship established their connection with the sequel of the Mahabharata War—that the throne which went to the sons of Puru and Yadavas was again lost by the curse of Yajati upon his son Yadoo and eventually passed to Subhadra's grandson, Parikshit. What Bhagiratha did to his ancestors, the sons of Sagara, Krishna, Balaram and Subhadra did to their ancestors to release them from the curse of Yajati. This is the system of deliverance by Pitrijajna, which system the Mahabharata elucidates. In Tritha-Jattra Parva, Chapter CXIV, in Kalinga Baitarani, the Pandavas with Draupadi offered oblations to their manes and the sacrifice of Visvamittra took place. It can be justly inferred that Daksha Yajna was performed there. For ready reference the translation of the chapter is given. It speaks for itself:—

"Vaishampayana said :—O Janmejoya, thereupon the Pandavas started from the Kousiki and went, one after the other, to all the sacred shrines. O king, going to the sea where the Ganges mingles with it, he performed the sacred ceremony of a plunge in the centre of the five hundred rivers. O descendant of Bharata, that ruler of earth, the hero, accompanied by his brothers then went along the shore of the ocean to the land of the Kalingas. Lomasha said:—O son of Kunti, this is Kalinga where flows the river Vaitarani, where (on the banks of which) Dharma performed sacrifices under the protection of the celestials. This is the northern bank (of the Vaitarani) always frequented by the Brahmanas, inhabited by the Rishis, suitable for performing sacrifices and adorned with a hill. It rivals the path by which a virtuous man fit for going to heaven goes to the celestial region. In the days of Yore, the Rishis performed sacrifices at this spot. O king of kings, here at this spot Rudra seized the sacrificial beast. O king of kings, he then exclaimed. 'This is my share.' O best of the Bharata race, the (sacrificial) beasts being thus taken away, the celestials then thus spoke to him. "Do not cast covetuous eyes on the property of others. Do not disregard all the righteous rules." They then

addressed pleasing words of glorification to Rudra (Siva). They gratified him with a sacrifice and they offered him suitable honours. Thereupon, giving up the beasts, he went away by the path trodden by the celestials. O Yudhisthira, hear from me what then happened to Rudra. The celestials from the fear of Rudra set apart for eternity the best portion of all shares (of a sacrifice) such as was fresh and not stale. The man, who bathes at this spot and recites this ancient story, sees with his human eyes the path that leads to the celestial region.

"Vaishampayana said :—Thereupon all the highly exalted Pandavas with Draupadi descended to the Vaitarini and offered oblations to the Pitris. Yudhisthira said :—O Lomasha, behold, how great is the merit of a pious act! Having bathed in this spot with proper form. I seem no more to touch the world of men. O vow-observing Rishi, through your grace I see all the regions. This is the sound of the recitations (of the Vedas) by the high-souled Rishis. Lomasha said :—O Yudhisthira, O ruler of men, the place from which you hear this sound, is distant from here three hundred thousand Yojanas, keep quiet. O king, this is the celestial forest of the self-create (Brahma) where, O king of kings, the powerful Vishwamitra performed his sacrifices. In which sacrifices the self-create (Brahma) gave away to the illustrious Kashyapa, as Dakshina, this earth with all its mountains, rivers and countries. O son of Kunti, as soon as earth was given away, she became sad; and thus she spoke in anger to the exalted lord of the world. 'O exalted one, you should not have given me away to any mortal. Your this giving me away would come to nothing, for I am going down to the nether world.' O Ruler of earth, seeing the earth sad and despondent, the exalted Rishi, Kashyapa, gratified her by a propitiatory act. O son of Pandu, thereupon the earth was gratified with his ascetism. She again rose from the water and remained as a sacrificial altar. O king, yonder before us is the spot with the distinct form of that sacred altar. O great king, ascending it, become great in prowess. O king, this is that sacred altar stretching as far as the sea; be blessed by ascending it; and of yourself across the sea. When you will ascend it to-day, I shall perfom the ceremony to avert all evils from you, for, O descendant of Ajamira, this altar here, as soon as it is touched by a mortal, goes down into the sea. 'I bow to the God who protects the universe, I bow to the God who is beyond this universe. O lord of gods, come near this salt sea. The fire, the sun, the organ of generation, water, the goddess, the seed of Vishnu, nectar and the navel of nectar. The god of fire is the organ that generated you (ocean). The earth is your body. Vishnu gave the seed that caused your being, You are the navel of nectar.' O son of Pandu, you must recite the above words of truth, and as you recite you must quickly ascend this altar O Pandava, thus those words of truth must be audibly recited; and while thus reciting them, one must plunge into this lord of rivers (ocean). O son of Kunti, O best of the Kurus, else this lord of waters of divine origin, this great ocean, must not be touched even by the end of a Kusa (grass). Vaishampayana said :—Thereupon, when the ceremony to avert evils had been completed, the high-souled Yudhisthira went into the sea. Having performed all that the Rishi (Lomasha) had ordered, he went to the Mahendra (mountain) and spent the night there." *

There is one significant fact above all to hold Bengal and Orissa as the place where the first creation of man took place, for the Mongolo-Dravidian type predominates there. The Santhals of Chhota Nagpur represent the Dravidian type and the central regions of India belong to the Aryo-Dravidian group. It proves the theory that the early people had no fixed habitation. They went to Mongolia and Dravid and when

* The Mahabharata, Chapter CXIV, Vana Parva, page 173, verses, 1—30.

their descendants returned to their home they formed the Mongolo-Dravidian group, and those Aryas who moved to Central India by inter-marriage formed the Arya-Dravidian group. Along the ridges of the Himalayas the Mongolian type is represented by the Bodo of Assam, Garurigs of Nepal, Lopchas of Sikkim and Darjeeling, and the Peytho-Dravidians are the Lama and the Coorgs of Western India, and from the valley of the Ganges to Ceylon the Dravidian type prevails. The pure Arya race in India can only be determined struggling for existence in the midst of the uncivilised people, the Asuras, who were beastly for their selfish ends as denounced in the first Sloka of Valmiki before he undertook to write the Ramayana.

The original fight seems to have started from the idea of race propagation and an easy method of life. To reign is worth everything was the idea of the Asuras, but the Devas or Aryas tried to find out by labour how one could live long with wisdom so that one's labour would not be lost to posterity. This is the ambrosia churned out of the ocean in the Puranas and the cause of the fight between the Devas and Asuras. The sages took both sides and were ultimately divided. The god Siva was worshipped by the Asuras.

An annual Fair takes place on the Sivaratri festival in Bhagulpur where there is a Siva called Srigeswar after the sage Rishyasringa, who lived in Singheswara, 24 miles from Raghopur Station on the B. N. Ry. Line, which starts from Semaria Ghat on the Ganges opposite Mokameh Ghat. One and a half miles from Mokameh there is a place where, it is said, Parasurama lived. The place of residence of the famous charitable Karna is ascribed to the place called Karna-Garah in Midnapure District, within Jhalabari Thana, where the remains of a big temple are found. All these shrines connected with local traditions cannot be spurious imaginations of men to make money. There is a story of the king Indradyumna told by Markendeya in the Mahabharata which connects Krishna with Jagannath of Puri, who was established by the king of that name, and its age is very very ancient.

"Vaishampayana said:—The Rishis and the Pandavas again asked Markendeya,—'Is there any who possesses longer life than you?'' He told them, 'Yes, there is a royal sage named Indradumna. His virtue being diminished, he fell from heaven crying, 'My achievements are lost'. He came to me and asked, 'Do you know me?' To him said I, 'From our eager desire to acquire virtue we do not stay at one place. We live for one night only in one village or in one town. A man like us therefore cannot possibly know who you are. The fasts and vows that we are to observe make us weak in body, therefore we are unable to follow worldly pursuits to earn wealth.' He said to me, 'Is there anyone who possesses a longer life than you?' I replied 'There lives an owl named Pravakarna on the Himalayas. He is older than I. He may know you. That part of the Himalayas where he lives is far from this place.

He became a horse and carried me to the place where that owl lived. Then he asked it. 'Do you know me?' It reflected for some time and then said 'No, I do not know you.' Having been thus addressed, the royal sage Indradumna asked the owl:—'Is there anyone who possesses a longer life than you?' Having been thus addrresed, it said, 'Yes, there is a lake called Indradumna (the Indradumna Sarovar in Puri); in it lives a crane named Nadijangha. He is older than we. You can ask him.' Thereupon Indradumna, taking both myself and the owl, went to the lake where Nadijangha lived. We asked the crane, 'Do you know this king Indradumna?' He reflected for a moment and then said, 'I do not know the king Indradumna'. Thereupon we asked him, 'Is there anyone more long lived than you?' He said 'Yes. Here lives in this lake a tortoise named Akupara. He is older than I. He might know something of this king. Therefore ask Akupara'. Then that crane asked the tortoise Akupara. He said, 'Our intention is to ask you something Please come to us?' Hearing this, the tortoise came out of the lake to the bank where we all were. When he came, we asked him, 'Do you know this king Indradumna?' He (tortosie) reflected for a moment. His eyes were filled with tears, and his mind was much agitated. He trembled all over his body and became almost senseless. Then with joined hands he said 'Why, don't I know this King? He placed sacrificial stakes one thousand times when kindling the sacrificial fire. This lake was made by the feet of the kine given away by this king to the Brahmanas as Dakshinas when the sacrifice was completed. I have lived here ever since.' When we were hearing all this from the tortoise, a celestial car came there from the celestial region and an invisible voice was heard which said, 'Come and go to the place you desire to obtain in heaven. Your achievements are great. Therefore cheerfully come to the place (set apart) for you. Here occur these Slokas: 'The report of virtuous acts spreads all over the earth and it reaches heaven. As long as the report lasts so long it is said that he lives in heaven. The man, the report of whose evil deeds is talked about, is said to fall down; and he lives in the lower region as long as that evil report lasts. Therefore a man should be virtuous if he desires to obtain heaven. Abandoning a sinful mind, he should seek refuge in virtue'. Having heard this, the king said, 'Let the car stay here so long I do not take back the old persons from the places whence I brought them'. Having brought me and the owl Pravarkarna to our respective places, he went away in that car to the place which was a fit region for him. Longlived as I am I saw all this. Vaishampayana said:—Thus Markendeya told all this to the Pandavas. The Pandavas said:—O blessed one, you acted properly in causing king Indradumna, who had fallen from heaven, to regain it. He (Markendeya) said:—'The son of Devaki Krishna also had thus rescued the royal sage Nriga who had fallen into hell. He caused him to regain heaven".*

The reference to king Nriga is an interesting allusion to how that king was taken back to heaven like Indradyumna when he worshipped the deity established by him, which received the present name Jagannath, Balaram, and Subhadra. It is also interesting that there are very well-known temples on the way to Puri at Sakshigopal and Bhubaneswar, which cannot but be positive proofs of the existing connection of Krishna worship of Epic days in the idols established by Indradyumna, a king of very ancient times.

However, the greatness of the Indian Epic lies in the natural and revealed religion together with that of humanity, as enunciated by

*The Mahabharata, Vana Parva, Chapter CXCIX, verses 1—18, pages 295-296.

Krishna and Vyasa. The Ramayana, with Yoga-Vasistha and Adhyatma Ramayana, cannot be superior to the Mahabharata. Yoga-Vasistha deals with Vedanta philosophy and Adhyatma Ramayana is said to have been composed by Vyasa in seven divisions of 4000 Slokas which deals with Karma, Bhakti, Dharma and politics and there is also Rama-Gita. It is not so popular as the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. Vyasa explains the duties of man in different stages and spheres of activity in a methodical arrangement by examples. He introduced in the Epic the system of examples being better than precepts for realisation of the intricacies of religion and truth. European scholars compared Goutama with Aristotle, Kanada with Thabs, Jaimini with Socrates, Kapila with Pythagoras, Patanjali with Zeno, and Vyasa with Plato. The authority of Vyasa was unquestioned, as so many Puranas were ascribed to him. The Indian Epics, however changed, comprised the most valuable part of ancient history and geography.

The rosaries of Tulsi wood and berries called Rudraksha are used in counting prayers to Krishna and Siva, respectively, and the wooden gods were the most ancient emblems till figures of stone and metal came into vogue to combat the wear and tear of time. Trees were worshipped from the very early times and Akshaya-Bata at Allahabad Fort and Bodhidruma of Gaya are well-known. The images of Jagannath from Nim trees continue the old idea of Nature worship, which was the earliest form of worship. It still lingers in the worship of Sasthi, the goddess of children, with the branches of Aswatha and Bata for the propagation of children.

' In the Vizagapatam district, a peculiar caste is the Gola, a pastoral caste like the Goalas of Bengal and the Gauras of Northern Orissa. They are said to be descended from Krishna himself, and their social status is fairly high. They are distributed all over the Telugu country and contain many different sub-divisions."

"The Vaishnavas are burnt and pay special reverence to Purushottama or Jagannatha of Puri." *

The oversea dominions of the Kalingas are given thus:—

"Kalinga had built up a great overseas empire aud spread its colonies as far as the Philippine Islands in the East and far South into the Islands of the Indian Archipelago. Very probably Chandragupta found out that it would not be possible for him to upset the power of Kalinga. So it was left for his grandson, the great Asoka, to conquer Kalinga.†

"The Kalingan origin of the earliest colonists from India does not depend merely on the term now applied to Indians in the Indian Archipelago, but also on definite archaeological and historical evidence. During the reign of the Chola king, Rajendradeva Parakesarivaman, one of the younger sons of the great Chola conqueror,

* Professor R. D. Banerji's "History of Orissa," Vol. I, pages 25-26.

† Professor R. D. Banerji's "History of Orissa," Vol. I, page 62.

Rajendra Chola I Gangaikondan, an expedition was sent to Ceylon some time before 17th August, 1055. This inscription is to be found in the Manimangalam or the Rajagopala Perumal temple in the Tanjore District. It is recorded that this army captured the king Vira-Salamegha (Vira-Salamegan) who was beheaded. There was, therefore, a king of Ceylon belonging to a Kalingan dynasty, which country had itself lost its independence long before that date. Further records of the colonisation of Further India and the Indian Archipelago by the people of Kalinga is to be found in the History of Burma and Siam."*

The discovery of coins in Mayurbhanja State with the legend in Greek script and the old Persian language bears testimony to the communications and trade relations.

* Professor R. D. Banerji's "History of Orissa," Vol. I, pages 94-95.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION OF LOVE.

The very creation of the Universe is ascribed to the love of God Maya. It is the finding of ancient Hindu philosophy. Fancy charms men and women more than reality. All things on earth are immortal but the spirit of love. He dies who leaves no image behind, but he who does is immortal. The customs, manners, laws are like leaves on the tree which wither and grow—they have never been fixed and stationary but change with the time. The world is a beautiful book, but is of little use to those who are not taught to read it. Noble blood is an accident of birth, but noble actions characterise the great.

The Atharva Veda deals with the science of medicine and magic, etc., and the Angirasa family, who were the great exponents, were thus styled Atharva Angirasa. Divine love is represented in the art of healing and all the ancient sages practised it. The book of medicine and art of healing as a science became so important, that it received the name of Ayur Veda, the science of longevity, and occupied an equal if not higher place than the Ancient Indian Vedas. The fight between Devas and Asuras was the theme of the Bharata Samhita, either for the possession of Tara, the wife of Brihaspati, or for the possession of the throne of Heaven between Indra and Britta.

But the age in which the Mahabharata grew was not the time of the origin of civilisation, when rough passion contrasted favourably with the cold calculation of all sorts of considerations. The difference of the Indian Epic ideal of an ancient royal princess like Draupadi is realised if placed side by side with the Calevala, the Finnish Epic, where a bride of gold and silver is forged by the Divine Smith for Wainamonier, who was at first very pleased to have his wife such a wealthy girl, but soon found out that in spite of fires and furs, whenever he touched her she froze him. Draupadi was not so. She was the life and soul of the Pandavas. The Hindu creation is the work of Maya or love. The origin of love has exercised philosophers of Ancient India to connect it with the creation, and Adya-Sakti Uma, the consort of Siva, or Lakshmi of Narain, either of them is represented. Love at first is like a mirage, the relation of a previous existence. Deep affection is of slow growth and it is won by deep devotion. Love must arise from the heart and not by constraint. The poets sang of it, and it is as mysterious as ever, for it has no connection with flesh and blood. Love is the product of the highest

culture, in man and woman it is not usually the fruit of a marriage. Love gives an instinctive insight into the human heart and defies distance and the elements. When the five elements are exercised by Nature, then the creation takes place under Samkhya system of philosophy. The religion and philosophy of the Hindus have made love the stepping-stone to heaven, and Yudhisthira and Sudarsana, the two ancient kings, whom their wives could not disillusion from the path of rectitude, went to heaven in person.

"Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above;
For love is heaven and heaven is love.

"And if there be a human tear
From passion's drop refined and clear,
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a dutious daughter's head." (SCOTT).

The first symptom of love is timidity in a man and boldness in a girl. The two sexes have a tendency to approach and each assumes the qualities of the other. Love makes an alliance of friendship and animalism, it is passion if the latter is gross and sensual. The moral progress of the world depends on love. There is no service worthier than that which love renders. The remembrance of a beloved form, be it of man, woman or child, becomes a shadow to all the actions of a lover. The science of love is the philosophy of the heart, it is unconquerable.

Children are the gifts of God and love and sometimes they come to expose guilty love. Surely the great author Vyasa, Pandu and the Pandavas did not come to the world to expose guilty love as the dramatic author sought to expound without rhyme or reason. The exposition of the position of girls and marriage by the Sun to Kunti cannot but excite the laughter of any sane and sensible man. These are the worst interpolations and should not find a place in the great Epic.

"Surya said:—O beautiful damsel of sweet smiles, neither your father, nor your mother, nor your superiors are competent to bestow you. May you be happy. Hear what I say. O damsel, the term Kanya, derived from the root Kama (to desire) is applied to a maiden, because she desires (to have intercourse with) everybody. Therefore, O fairhipped girl of excellent complexion, she is free (to act as she chooses) in this world. You will, O beauteous girl, on no account fall away from virtue (by satisfying my desire). How can I, who seek the welfare of everybody commit an act of sin? O fair complexioned girl, it is the human nature that all men and women should be without restraint. And it is asserted that the contrary (condition) is (its) *perversion*. You will also remain a virgin even after having held intercourse with me and your son will be of mighty arms and high renown. (*Mbh., Chapter CCCVI, Vana Parva, verses 12—16*).

That this was then quite against the custom was evident from the words of Kunti.

"Vaishampayana said:—Beholding him, the maiden was covered with shame. And being alarmed, the damsel spoke these words to Surya:—' O lord of rays, go to your own place. This outrage on your part is greatly distressing to me as I am a maiden. Father, mother and other superiors only are competent to bestow my person. I will not surrender my virtue. In this world keeping their bodies (pure) is considered to be the highest duty on the part of women. O deity possessed of the wealth of effulgence, in order to test the potency of the Mantras, I have, through mere childish curiosity, invoked you. O God, you should pardon me, considering that it has been done by a mere girl.*.........Kunti said:—O god, my father is alive, and so also my mother and friends. And since they are (still) living, this violation of duty (on my part) is not allowable. If, O God, I hold this unlawful intercourse with you, then the reputation of this race will be destroyed for my sake. Or if you consider it a virtue I will then, O best of those that shed heat, gratify your desire even without being given away to you by my friends. As O irrepressible one, the virtue, the reputation, the renown and the life of all embodied beings are established in you, may I remain chaste after having yielded my person to you.'"†

The appeal of Kunti demonstrates beyond all doubt that woman remains ignorant of sexual knowledge until her marriage, and that is not disclosed by the Gods above. In the love stories of God the mythology of love is expressed. This is not so. The Hindu mythology of love is given in the love episode of Siva and Parvati, which became the theme of the great Indian poet Kalidasa's 'Kumar Sambhaba; the birth of Kartick', which the great Epic also describes.‡ That chastity and purity of life are virtues in woman the life devotion and sacrifice of Parvati prove. They would thus be equal in the estimation of the barbarian and the civilised.

Chastity owes its origin to the self-restraint and self-respect of a woman to preserve the tradition of the family to which she belongs. It means the quality of virginity or continence and not consecration. The speech of Kunti speaks for itself. Could God be made miserable and revengeful by any human deeds or with the affairs of the world? The lesson deduced in the Great War of Kurukshettra is nothing else but this, that death is better than a life of passion, vegetating only in ignorance through the cultivation of passion and avarice, fruitful of dire miseries and woes.

' Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave."

(WORDSWORTH.)

*The Mbh., Chapter CCCV, Vana Parva, verses 22—24.
†The Mbh., Chapter CCCVI, Vana Parva, verses 8—11.
‡Adi Parva, Chapter LXII, verse 34.

The main source of strength, activity and happiness depends upon human love. Contentment is a state of negation, a sleepy kind of thing. Positive unhappiness drives people to action and negative unhappiness wastes their powers and blinds them to the beauty and the joy of life. Happiness is not enjoyment nor the desire for it; not a negative measure of shutting out, but a positive measure of taking in more and more. It is a state of activity and energy, the true complement of human vitality, which is the joy of effort leading to success and ever leading to new efforts, not actually fixed upon one desire and one person.

Man and woman are made to learn how to read and write; so it is in the case of love. The pleasures of the senses are the snares of the Devil. Love pleads again and again the worth and dignity of the senses. It is not the obscene jest of the music hall or love in the public print of a novel or the red rag to celibate ecclesiastics. Love is the food of the spirit of enjoyment. The first step seems to be to master all the beauty of the world through the five senses of enjoyment so that it can join spirit with spirit as body with body. That is the love which Krishna, as the father of the Hindu Cupid, preached in Brindaban by the example of Rashlila being absent in person but present in the heart of his lovers in spirit, in unison with the bright moon and stars above in the autumn.

In Hindu Philosophy it is essential to control the mind, as a horse is controlled by a rider, so that the senses cannot rule the mind. One who does not know how to ride is thrown off and kicked. This is as the fate of Durjodhana. An artist, who can master his material and is endowed with the technique of giving expression to his paintings, is a great master. He can correct human inclinations by his picture with the use of his brush. Pleasure seekers' distress in love painters depict in pictures while poets describe it in verses. They prove that the body is the gateway to the spirit within. It is the means of approach of human powers to realise what is detestable or beautiful, glorious or holy.

Love is not mere animal desire or sentimentality of the superiority of man and female subservience. Knowledge in action is quite different from that used on living. It is better to marry than to burn or freeze—that is the average old and false dichotomy of body and spirit. This is reflected in the marriage of Ruru and Pramadhara in the Pousya Parva of the great Epic. They found all the world more lovely because of each other and the one sacrificed half of his longevity for the return of life to the lover because the marriage did not then take place, the exaltation was not then over. There is nothing like real love for keep-

ing it alive and for revealing how little passion matters or public criticisms or ignominy. Poets make separations between lovers to demonstrate it.

For Nala and Damayanti, Rama and Sita, but in the case of Draupadi no such thing happened. They do not come to despise each other as soon as what brought them together has disappeared. Siva, the great God, tried to stifle love and was said to have burnt Cupid. He discovered his mistake, that the senses were the elements, not indeed of comfort, but of vital happiness, which open the glory of spiritual adventure. So long as he looked down upon love as self-surrender not as self-fulfilment, there was a fight between him and Narayana, which the Bharata Samhita describes.

To love and to be wise is not possible when it is a question of passion, for the supreme happiness of life seems to have been the conviction that one is loved. Love when it is nursed through shame and sorrow must necessarily be holier and more sincere than when it is reared in pride and fostered in luxury. The soul of man and woman lives in love, which no age can freeze. Sometimes one does not actually understand what one loves, but lovers have an ineffable instinct to detect their rivals. In lovers' quarrels the party who loves most is always agreeable to admit the greater fault. A lover is no better than a hunter, for there is much the same pleasure in hunting the animal fit for the shaft of cupid in a glance of passion. Who ever loved that did not love at the very first sight? Love is thus represented in the arrow of Cupid at the sight of Venus, both in the East and the West.

The trident and axe were the weapons of the great God Siva and were called Pinakpani. Love has material existence in the body and moral uplift in mind and spiritual union in the soul. The material world is the product of love, with the spirit presiding over such a love it is in the mind. Beasts produce a greater number of children than human beings. There is some mysterious cause behind it. Medical science has been trying to find out the cause of the secret of male and female children and sterility but has not yet been successful.

Children are not the fruits of passion. The ancient kings married hundreds of beautiful women yet they were not blessed with children; they had to seek the aid of the gods for children. Rama Chandra and his brothers were the fruits of sacrifice. Draupadi and her brothers also were. The Pandavas were no exception as Pandu went to the forest to obtain sons by religious merit. The attributes of the Pandavas relate to the gods who blessed them in response to the prayer of Pandu and his good wife Kunti. The connection between gods and men has

been spiritual and not material ever since the days of the Vedas. Poets may have license to do what they like, but that can never be a fact of history. Krishna is the emblem and hero of love but he was not a slave to woman or to earthly pleasures in the way Yajati, his ancestor, was described to be in the great Epic. He was not like Siva, who could bless men with children. The great Epic describes how Krishna had to seek the help of that God when one of Krishna's wives, Jambabati, wanted to be blessed with a son. Krishna was not connected with mundane affairs of love and its fruit, it is the function of Siva and his consort Parvati.

In the dramatic Mahabharata the two deities Sun and Indra were engaged to protect their children Karna and Arjuna. Krishna failed to bribe Karna with a kingdom by the disclosure that he was the son of Kunti. The fallacy of the argument was that he would ascend the throne of king Pandu the moment Yudhisthira would come to know of it, for Karna was alleged to have been conceived in the maidenhood of Kunti. If Karna could ascend the throne, if that was the custom, then Vyasa could have done so to the throne of Santanu, left vacant by the death of Vichitrabirjya. All these are interpolations of the worst nature, done to cry down the Pandavas and their family.

The Suta reciter made Karna one of their reared children, a greater hero than Arjuna of the Kshatriyas, as the Nishads made Eklabya. If Karna was really the child of Kunti there would not have been any ground for Parasurama to curse him. Besides, Karna was not a man to disclose to his friend Durjodhana what Krishna and Kunti disclosed to him and turned it to great use to avert the war. In other words, to secure inheritance to the throne without a blow. All these are stories to belittle the Pandavas, who were loved and admired by the Hindu public. They would have been idolised but for the followers of Krishna worship, who made Krishna the great philosophic Narayana.

The descendants of Arjuna made him Nara, the great friend of Narayana—the two separate entities given against the original connection of the Mahabharata or the Bharata Samhita. The Bhagavata tried to set it right by the preaching of the religion of love, enunciated by Krishna and his lovers in Rashlila. Purana mentions the example of Radha, the disappointed consort of Ayana, first conceiving the idea of spiritual love and connecting it with the ideal earthly lover Krishna. To her excited thought, her divine spouse became a living presence by the sound of a flute, the sight of the river Jamuna, or the voice of a cuckoo. She was lost in love, she went to prayer, agitated and tremu-

lous, and exclaimed in ecstacy: " Let me die in your embrace, my love, do not chastise in the way you are indulging. Have you no pity on the torments I suffer? You seem to take pleasure in my ailing instead of removing it." These were not the expressions of Kunti to the Sun.

Then one could understand a grown-up girl's experience of love, and sometimes that love is converted into religious emotions and hallucination. Nuns, it is said, used to be seized with religo-sexual frenzy. (Francis Parkman's " The Jesuits in North America" describes it). Kunti is the bright example of chastity that the great Epic describes. The constancy of Kunti mentioned in the table of contents in the great Epic is sought to be traduced with Karna's birth.

"Vyasa has fully described the greatness of the Kuru race, virtues of Gandhari, the wisdom of Vidura and the constancy of Kunti. He has also described the divinity of Vasudeb (Krishna), the goodness of the Pandavas and the evil conduct of the sons of Dhritarastra."*

Again, in the Vaisampayana edition of the Epic, which Souti recited, the main idea was not disturbed but the names of the Pandavas and the Kurus were mentioned without the names of the heroines. What was said was only amplified:—

"Duryoshana is a great tree created out of passion, Karna is its trunk; Sakuni is its branches; Dushashana is its fruit and flowers and weak Dhritarastra is its root ....."† Yudhisthira is a great tree created out of virtue and religion; Arjuna is its trunk; Bhima is its branches; two sons of Madri are its flowers and fruits; and Krishna, Brahma and Brahmanas are its roots."‡

The introduction of the connection of Karna with Kunti as his mother is a clear contradiction of what is said in the table of contents and it cannot but be an interpolation.

In the days of the Mahabharata the liberty of women and the tender emotions of enduring love were not kept private in the harems of palaces. The enumeration of the incidents of the Ramayana in the Mahabharata and in the Bana Parva might be a case of clear interpolation of later days. The illustrious, cultured ladies like Draupadi raised by their conduct the temples of chastity not in the body of the person of women but in their heart of hearts, the sanctuary of true love. Women's dependence was not then written on everything. Draupadi exacted respect not only from her beloved ones, but even from her enemies. The possession of the Empire of Yudhisthira was found quite incomplete without the Queen Draupadi, and it was for this she was staked and

*Adi Parva, Chapter I, verses 99-100.

†108 verse.

‡109 verse.

the Dice Hall would have been converted into a field of battle but Yudhisthira did not like to recover the lost kingdom in such a mad brawl of fists and blows, as had actually taken place at the Swayambara ceremony of Draupadi.

The dignity and position of the Pandavas were then quite different. If Yudhisthira had allowed it, the whole world would have laughed at him; that the brothers and cousins were fighting for the possession of Draupadi. He knew quite well that to test him all these things were done. He passed the ordeal unscathed and Dhritarastra had to come to his rescue by the conduct of Draupadi. Draupadi was not swerved by the cruel persecutions nor were the brothers of Yudhisthira, although Bhima showed signs of restlessness and was warned by Arjuna. What Lakshman and Hanuman were to Rama, Arjuna and Bhima were to Yudhisthira. Draupadi was a friend and relation of Krishna, and in fact he was the match-maker. Krishna was the ideal God of love, the heroic sister Subhadra was given to Arjuna, the glorious Draupadi went to Yudhisthira, and Krishna himself ruled the heart of all the maidens of Brindaban, and even when they were married they could not derive that pure delight which they experienced in their maidenhood in the exploits with Krishna. The Rashlila of Brindaban, enacted during the bright moon and stars of the season, if it was purely a case of sensual pleasures, would easily have satisfied them with their husbands at home, but it was something more serious than that. Their hearts yearned after the union with the heart of Krishna, which the young playmates used to enjoy in their younger days. The wife cannot give the delight that beloved class-mates excite in a meeting after a long interval of separation.

Passionate love destroyed Lanka (Ceylon) and Troy. When one is in its possession prudence bids adieu. The sigh of such a love is called the last of wisdom. Beauty of persons does not last long, like that of the mind, which is to be prized above all. The Indian Epics want to impress upon their readers that virtue is the right title of nobility and kingdom, and anyone, be he a king, who leads a base life, is a monster in nature. Esteem and affection are due to virtuous conduct, but when the tranquility and peace, and last, though not least, the religion of a kingdom are at stake any sacrifice to establish them is not too dear. Many a battle was fought for beauty of person in a woman and for her possession. The Ramayana was for Sita, but the Mahabharata was not so. The field of the great battle of Kurukshettra is described as the place where the fight for religion took place and the great incarnation of God was Krishna, who was not a wielder of arms or a fighting hero, but the charioteer of a hero, Arjuna, his brother-in-law.

The moral of the great Epic seems to have been that success follows virtue and Krishna. He was the great receptacle of love which in youth ignited the heart of the fair maidens of Brindaban, united in ties of marriage with thousands and thousands of Royal Princesses and who kept them in peace in Dwarka and gave birth to numerous heroes and amongst them Cupid, the God of Love. Gandhari, the Queen Mother of the Kurus, on behalf of the widows of the fallen heroes in the battlefield, cursed Krishna as he did not prevent the cruel carnage and the miseries of thousands of unfortunate women who lost their husbands and children. Krishna, in order to appease their great grief by practical demonstration, accepted the curse gladly. That all earthly creation is liable to destruction except the true spirit of love; this is the true philosophy of love and divinity enunciated in the great field of battle of Kurukshettra by the driver of the chariot of the great hero Arjuna.

In world politics and religion the ideal Narayana and Nara were at first represented by Krishna and Yudhisthira, who died without a successor. During the reign of the descendants of Arjuna, Yudhisthira was replaced by Arjuna. The great Pandavas represented the five important members of the body politic and Krishna the spirit within, and Draupadi the emblem of prosperity and love. The maintenance of the body does not depend entirely on material food and drink so much as on spiritual. The spirit of intelligence of Krishna and the love of Draupadi controlled the five senses of the body politic of Government to establish the true religion in India, which was struggling for existence in the Great War amongst the followers of the great exponents of the six philosophies of India.

The atheistical doctrine of Charvaka, the Epicurus of India, was the culminating point of the breaking asunder of society and the religion of divine love. Draupadi was dragged in the Dice Hall when she was in the menstrual flux. The great poet Vyasa thereby demonstrated to the world at large that the cause of love does not flow through the same passage of passion which creates abhorrence in the minds of all. The heart within was left untouched by her sufferings and insult, by the form of true love for the husband Yudhisthira, to whom she did not utter a word of blame. She as a true wife did not lose the great opportunity presented to her of releasing the distressed husband. She did not fall in a faint like Sita; she fearlessly defended herself and the action of the good husband and nonplussed the great assembly by her difficult question, her heroic and modest behaviour, befitting the dignity of the Ancient Empress of India.

The four subjects of life, religion, wealth, desire and emancipation, are after all indissolubly connected with love, and the great exponent

of that love in dramatic life is a Hindu wife. Such an ideal wife was Draupadi, who did not have that selfish idea of looking to the interest of her husband only, but looked to the general welfare of the family and kingdom. That was the philosophy of love a queen, nay an empress of India like Draupadi had to represent and which she did so wonderfully in every place and whenever she was called upon to do so. She was actually the goddess of prosperity and love, whom the Pandavas worshipped and their enemies wanted to possess and attempted to do so in vain. Krishna was the emblem of universal love and the reflection of the same was found in Draupadi and hence she was called Krishna. All of them were not of a bright white colour, which in science is the mixture of seven colours, but that of the colour of the sky. Love is not the mixture or fusion of colours but is an original prime colour or takes colour, like the sky with clouds hovering there. The feelings, like the clouds, gather round the sky to shower rain and make the earth productive and happy. It might be said with great force about Draupadi:—

> "For beauty and her prudence claiming place
> And all praiseworthy excellence and grace."

Love bathes us rejoicing in the crystal light. A woman of beauty worthily deserves all the praise due to her. Peace surveys piety, humility and quiet, the product of love and affection. The great Epic Mahabharata describes the great characters in it in the same light. Draupadi dropped dead in the company of her husband and did not leave him, like Sita, disappointed and grieved. There lies the greatness of the Mahabharata. Yudhisthira did not look back when his beloved wife fell and died, or when his brothers shared the same fate one after the other. Arjuna, who is alleged to be Nara, did not escape it and he fell before Bhima.

Love, religion and philosophy grew side by side and may be said to be very closely inter-related. The great Epic tries to demonstrate by examples the end of Vedanta philosophy. Philosophy in India is nothing but the fulfilment of religion and Vedanta, as the name implies, is the goal of the Veda. Yudhisthira is represented as the son of the divine dispenser of justice Yama, for his piety and wisdom. Yama's sister is Jamuna, on whose bank and water are closely connected the love exploits of Krishna with the girls of Brindaban. The poetry of the Veda, rivers and their composition refer to the conception of love and its great sacrifices. The parental affection of Nature is reflected in the food and drink in the sweet scented lotus and clear water as well as fishes.

Surely the ethics and religion of love are conveyed in the music of verses, the poetry of the heart and soul of man and woman. Love

has a moral, political and spiritual side and the Indian Epics only describe the different phases so little understood and realised. The great Indian poet Kalidasa was immortalised by his Sakuntala, but he has not shown the political aspect of love nor the spiritual aspect. The Ramayana shows the political side of love in the exile of Sita after the fire ordeal as well as the Mahabharata in disowning the son of Sakuntala, Bharata, with whose feats the Mahabharata begins. The reason of king Dusmantya's refusal to admit him as the heir-apparent to the throne is not the curse of the sage Durbasa, as Kalidasa claimed, but that the king should learn to restrain his conduct in future and not to act like Dushantya for the obvious reason of giving grounds to wild speculations.

"Vaishampayana said:—O lady, my union with you took place in private. None knew of it, and therefore, it is natural that people should have thought that our union was only out of lust, and that we were not husband and wife. This son, installed as my heir-apparent, would have been considered as a man of impure birth. Therefore, I was thinking how best to establish your purity. O dearest, O lady of beautiful eyes, I have forgiven you for all the hard words you have uttered in anger. You are my darling.*"

The political object of the ancient kings is reflected in the above version of the king, but Sakuntala's reprimand includes the citation of Manu as to how kings obtained sons by five ways:

"Manu has said that there are five kinds of sons, namely those begotten by one on his wife, those obtained from others, those purchased for a price, those reared out of affection, and those begotten on other women."†

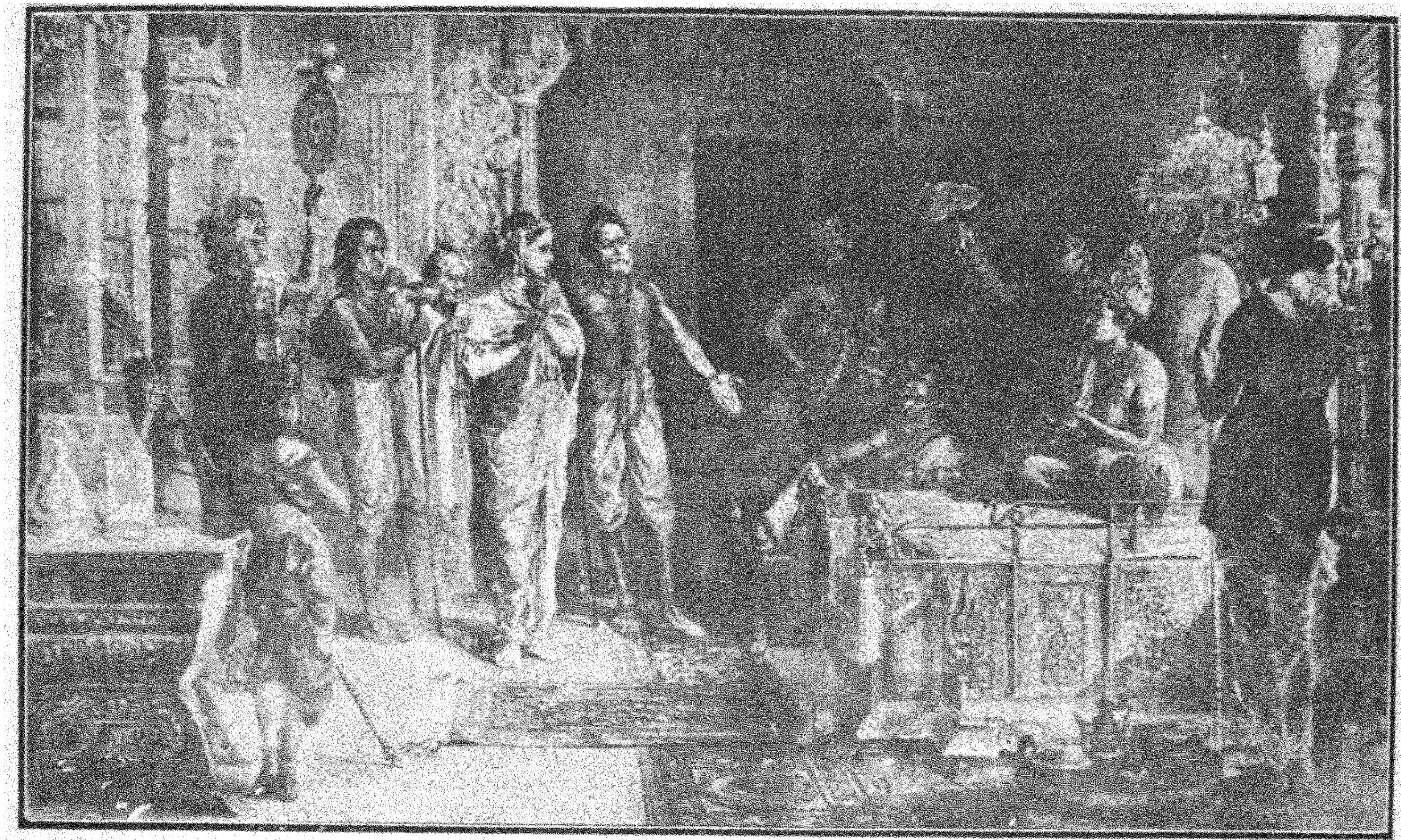
The king did not accept Bharata as his son until the voice of Heaven declared him to be his son and his declaration to the assembly reads:—

"Hear all of you the words of the messenger of Heaven. I myself know that this boy is my son. If I had accepted him as my son at Sakuntala's words, my people would have been suspicious, and my son also would not have been considered to be pure (of pure birth)."‡

King Santanu was the cursed king Mahavisha of the Ikshaku family who went to Heaven, but was found incompetent for his rude act of immorality. The incident conveys the ancient idea of heavenly morality in man and woman as against the Western idea, for which the great Epic poet Milton put it in "Paradise Lost."

"Once upon a time, the celestials were one day worshipping Brahma. Many royal sages and king Mahavisha were also present there. The queen of the rivers, Ganga also came there to pay her adorations to the Grandsire. Her garments, as

* The Mbh., Adi Parva, Chapter LXXIV, verses 121—123.
† Do. do. do. verse 98.
‡ Do. do. do. verses 115-116.



THE DISOWNING OF SAKUNTALA.
(Original in the Marble Palace, Calcutta.)

white as the moon, were blown away by the winds. As her person thus became exposed, the celestials bent down their heads, but the royal sage Mahavisha rudely continued to stare at her. For this (rude act), Mahavisha was cursed by Brahma. He said, 'You will be born on earth and, you shall then again attain to these regions.' The king (Mahavisha) then remembered all the monarchs and ascetics on earth and wished to be born as the son of the greatly powerful Partipa. The best of the rivers (Ganga), seeing the king Mahavisha lose his firmness, went away thinking him in her mind."*

This is the mythology of heavenly love with which the Mahabharata is closely connected. The love episode of Kacha and Devajani has a great bearing on the question of love and marriage of Ancient India. Kacha was the son of Vrihaspati, the well-known priest of the gods who went to Sukra to learn the great incantation by which Sukra brought to life the Asuras killed by the Devas. Devajani, the daughter of Sukra, fell in love with Kacha. The Asuras, knowing the wicked intention of Kacha, hacked him to pieces and burnt his body to ashes. All these proved abortive as Sukra revived him at the importunities of his daughter. A third time the Asuras killed him and burnt his body and the ashes were put in the wine the great sage Sukra took. Then came the final struggle of the love of Devajani and Sukra. The filial love had to sacrifice for the love of Devajani for Kacha, which was nothing more than an attachment of companionship. Kacha came to life ripping open the stomach of Sukra and Kacha revived his preceptor to life by the incantation of Sukra. The wine was then forbidden as a drink for the Brahmanas by Sukra as a remembrance of the incidents.† When Kacha was going to leave the preceptor's house Devajani offered her love and a proposal of marriage was made to him.

"Vaishampayana said:—Your vow is now over: you should now fix affection on me who love you. Accept my hand with ordained rites and Mantras. Kacha said:—You are an object of my respect and worship, as is your illustrious father. O lady of faultless features, you are an object of greater reverence to me (than your father). You are dearer than life to the high-souled Bhargava. O amiable lady, you are ever worthy of my worship, as you are the daughter of my preceptor. As your father Sukra, my preceptor, is ever honoured by me, so are you. O Devajani, therefore, you should not speak to me thus. Devajani said:—O best of the twice born, you are the son of my preceptor's son, you are not the son of my father. Therefore, you are an object of my respect and worship. O Kacha, when the Asuras killed you again and again, you should recollect to-day the love I showed towards you. O virtuous man remembering my love and affection for you, and also my devoted regard for you, you should not abandon me without any faults. Kacha said:—O lady of virtuous vows, do not urge me into such a sinful course. O lady of fair eyebrows, be graceful to me. O amiable lady, you are an object of greater regard than my preceptor. O large eyed lady, O lady of handsome face, O amiable maiden, the place the body of the son of Kavi, (Sukra) where you live, is also my

* The Mbh. Adi Parva, Chapter XCVI, verses 3—8, page 141.

† Chapter LXXVI, verse 66.

abode. You are truly my sister. O slender-waisted lady, O amiable maiden, do not say so. We have most happily passed the days we have lived together. There is perfect good feeling now existing between us. I ask your leave to go away. Bless me so that good may come to my journey. Remember me in your conversations as one who has not transgressed virtue. Serve my preceptor with readiness and singleness of heart. Devajani said: -If you refuse to make me your wife, solicited by me as I do, O Kacha, (indeed I say) your knowledge will bear no fruits. Kacha said:— I refuse to comply with your request, because you are my preceptor's daughter. (I did not refuse you) for any fault of yours. My preceptor also had not issued any command regarding this matter. Curse me if it pleases you. O Devajani, I have told you what should be the conduct of Rishis. I, therefore, do not deserve your curse. But notwithstanding all this you have cursed me out of desire and not from a sense of duty. Therefore, your desire shall not be fulfilled, no Rishi's son will ever accept your hand. You have said that my knowledge would not bear fruits. Let it be so. But it shall bear fruits in him whom I shall teach it.* '

The history, sense and spirit of earthly love may be found in the Vedic Mantras of incantations on the birth of a son. The Brahmanas utter the following Vedic Mantras at the birthday ceremony of the child.

'You are born of my body; you have sprung from my heart. You are myself in the form of my son. Live for one hundred years.' 'My life depends on you. The continuation of my race also depends on you. Therefore, live in happiness for one hundred years'.†

This forms the basis of the argument of Sakuntala's appeal to accept the son of her marriage with king Dushanta in the wood. She repeated the science of marriage with the curse :

"O Dushanta, if you refuse what I ask you to do, your head will to-day be divided into a thousand pieces. The learned men of old say that the husband himself, entering into the womb of his wife, comes out as the son. Therefore, the wife is called Jaya. The son that is born to a wise man, rescues the spirits of his deceased ancestors. Because the son rescues his ancestors from the hell, called Put, therefore he has been called by the self-created (Brahma) himself as Putra. A man conquers the world by the birth of a son; he enjoys eternity by that of a grandson; the great grandfathers enjoy eternal happiness by the birth of a grandson's son. She is a true wife who is a good house-wife; she is a true wife whose heart is devoted to her husband; she is a true wife who is faithful to her husband. A man's half is his wife, the wife is her husband's best of friends; the wife is the source of Dharma, Artha and Kama, the wife is the source of salvation. Those that have wives can perform religious acts; those that have wives lead domestic lives. Those that have wives can be happy, and those that have wives can achieve good fortune. The sweet speeched wives are their husband's friends on the occasions of religious acts; they are as mothers in the hours of illness and woe. Even in the deep forest, the wife is the refreshment and solace to her roaming husband. He who has a wife, is trusted by all. The wife, therefore, is man's great means of salvation. When the husband goes to the land of Yama, leaving this world, it is the devoted wife only that accompanies him there. The wife, gone before (dying before her husband), waits for the spirit of her husband, and if the husband goes before, the chaste wife soon follows him. O

* The Mbh., Chapter LXXVII, Adi Parva, verses 5—20.

† Mbh. Adi Parva, Chapter LXXIII, verses 61—63.

king, for all these reasons, marriage exists (in this world). The husband enjoys the company of his wife, both here in this world and hereafter. The learned men have said that a man himself is born as his son; therefore, a man whose wife has given birth to a son, should look upon her as his mother. Looking at the face of the son, begotten on his wife, a man sees his own face as he does in a mirror; and feels himself as happy as a virtuous man attaining to Heaven. Men, burnt by mental grief or afflicted by disease, feel as much relieved as a perspiring man does in a cool bath. No man, even in anger should ever do anything that is disagreeable to his wife; for happiness, joy, virtue and everything depend on the wife. Wife is the sacred soil in which the husband is born again. Even Rishis cannot create men without women. What is a greater happiness to a father than what the father feels when his son, running to him, clasps him with his (tiny little) arms, though his body is full of dust and dirt? Why are you treating with indifference this your son who has himself come to you, and who is wistfully casting his glances towards you? Even ants support their offspring and do not destroy their eggs. Why then should you not, being learned in the rules of piety, support your own child? The touch of the sandal paste, that of women and water, is not so pleasing as that of one's own infant son, locked in his embrace. As the Brahmana is the best among bipeds (men), as cow is the best among quadrupeds, as preceptor is the best among all superiors, so is the son among all objects pleasing to the touch*."

The most intimate personal human relationship of all the material world is the home, and it is said that the comfort of home life rests with the wife, who is in charge of the home. Man's energy and woman's devotion are the key-notes of success and prosperity. The rule for each individual human being is that the happiness of a human being depends upon love and true friendship. If love is true the question of losing interest does not arise in man or woman by reason of personality. The atmosphere of love is progressive and not stationary, and the great art of life is nothing but the perpetual realisation of love. The means of self-expression can bring out the individual quality of each man and woman where there is true love.

The work one does for no return or reward but for the sake of giving expression to his or her feelings, such work shows the vitality ever newly inspired by the breath of love. This form of self-expression is simply inexhaustible. Without this there is no true happiness in the intimate personal relationship of man and woman. Love is consciousness which unites the body, mind and spirit of lovers and there is hardly any question of sex-appeal. Love gives self-control and courage; one does not inherit it from father or mother, it is the result of cultivation and education of the soul within. Innocent love between mature man and woman is not as easy as amongst children. In youth if such love is continued it breeds gossip. One must either have the strength of mind to brave this or bid farewell to such friendship. Boys can be intimate friends with each other, likewise girls, but in that there is no peculiar

' The Mbh. Chapter LXXIV, verses 34—56.

sensitiveness of intellect, no grade of apprehension, no delicacy of humour which can make the forms of communication pleasant. It is not the sex attraction which is to be attributed to the special kind of pleasure one experiences, for passion or lust makes love more or less selfish and breeds envy and jealousy. Where there is ownness or exclusive idea of enjoyment there is jealousy and envy. Man or woman is not a mere chattel of love. Self control alone can still the lust of possession and it is for this the example of the king Sudarsana is cited in the beginning of Anusasana Parva, that he had the courage of his convictions, faced the truth and stilled the lust of possession which translated him to Heaven in person. By throwing away one's last rag of pride and possession one stands up robed and crowned with Heaven's diadem, worthy of being translated there. This is the perfection of human unselfish love, but the divine love on earth was demonstrated in the life of Sri Krishna, the wielder of the discus of love, not any divine weapon which Arjuna and others possessed through the boon of material gods Siva, Indra, Sun, or others.

The Great War of Kurukshettra was not only a terrible destruction of infidels, but produced the kingdom of the good Yudhisthira, a king of piety, truthfulness and virtue. The emotion of senses which sages like Visvamitra, Narada, etc., tried to stifle are not static but finite hungers. The beautiful Sakuntala was the offspring of the love of Visvamitra and the mother of the Bharata family of kings.

The Indian Epics are really grand and sublime as they please at all times all kinds of men. This united assent and combination of so many different judgments stamp a very high and unequivocal value on them which cannot legally be thrown aside. A wise son makes a father glad and God is delighted with the wisdom of his creation. The righteous shall be reigning in the memory of good men and the memory of the just is blessed. Wisdom is better than brute strength. The force of the tempest cannot blind the wisdom and experience of the pilot in saving his ship from being wrecked. The axe with the short stick removes the forest of trees. Who can stand in the fearful battle of Kurukshettra unhurt, except he be the emblem of Divine Love; who else could be the divine guide of the victorious heroes ? It was not the love of Draupadi or Subhadra that led the Pandavas to glory or victory.

Man does not care so much to look into the moral very carefully as he likes to stick to what is agreeable. Every one likes to make friendship with the dead, even if they be sworn enemies when alive. The tombs and their epitaphs are signs of repentance that they were neglected and envied during their life-time. If there are no public virtues how

can laws enforce them on the public at large ? A prophet or reformer is seldom honoured in his life-time. It is practically true that illustrious dead persons are calumnised by those who consider that their actions overshadowed them. There are few people who can wrap themselves in their own integrity. Cardinal Wolsey is represented to have said this to King Henry VIII by Shakespeare :—

> "My robe
> And my integrity to Heaven, is all
> I now dare call my own."

It is not the rich kings who display the good and pious men of the age, the intricacies of moral virtues and laws and the signs of the times in divine love. What Troy owes to Homer, India owes to Vyasa and Valmiki. The great virtues would have been lost if they had not been sung by poets. They are immortalised if they did their work properly with the right selection of heroes and heroines. Hindus burn their dead and do not erect tombs over their illustrious heroes and patriots. The bards and poets make their memorials in verse, but the public at large consecrate their memories in festivals and religious ceremonies.

The mass worshipped God with the king in his public sacrifices, religion he preached through his priest and the law established justice in the realm he ruled.

The Rig Veda reveals the truth of redemption by a sinless sacrifice and Prajapati is identified with the sacrifice. When the early system of sacrifices and offerings was not realised in its spiritual sense—that God to show his holiness and to become the sacrifice, typified by the sacrifices of the law, had to become incarnate—the idea of vicarious suffering for the reconciliation of rebellious beings was lost and sacrificed as the common legacy of all nations and they were soon converted into bribes to appease the angry god and demons so that they would not do the sacrificers any harm. The idea of protection and prevention became the ideal of man. Man had free will and ignorance and accordingly sought protection. The Upanishads gave him the first idea of God and repugnance to vice and favour to virtue were the essential traits of morality. Man wanted to know the author of this great Universe with his growing knowledge as he learnt to utilise the countless things around him. He soon realised the spirit of love in the great Creator, and found by and by that energy is the product of love and suffering. The desire to see the great Creator soon became the earnest aim of life of some men out of curiosity. The dynamic force of imagination gave birth to many things, and to punish the

wicked, who were the great persecutors of humanity, the incarnation of God, half powerful animal and half man, was conceived to establish the holiness and benefaction of God and the sinfulness of the wicked, or the Asuras as they were then styled.

Might was then the only right. Men fell prostrate with fear in the worship of the powerful to save themselves from utter destruction. The natural phenomena of earthquake, fire and flood made the intelligent realise the invisible power of the Creator. The Vedic sages prayed for forgiveness for any transgression made knowingly or unknowingly. This was the origin of the religion of the world. The idea of resentment is at the root of it. The Creator's loving holiness becomes a relative attribute to justice. The theory of action and judgment soon came into being. God is love, full of happiness, and he created this earth full of happiness and wealth for the just use of man and other beasts. Man was given free will and intelligence to develop a conscience to judge right and wrong, to co-operate in the works of God by holding communion with Him. Man was endowed with everything if he only utilised the power given to him. It is a choice to love either himself or the spirit of the Creator—there lies the difference between earthly and divine love.

The well-known saying is "Where there is a will there is a way". Will power is the root of the Yoga system of philosophy. God created the Universe by the fiat of his great will, and man sought union with Him by the will power to control his senses and mind. From the material the abstract spiritual idea of God came into being, of no form or figure to the wise. In envy the object of hatred and fear is always in the mind of the sinner; this is a process of abstraction of thought, an inferior system of Yoga for the vicious and ignorant. Ravana and his brothers, Kamsa and Sisupala, obtained their salvation through it The gates of Heaven were not closed to them like other religions. The Pouranic idea of salvation was by seven generations of births through devotion to God and by three of enmity. The Bible believes in miracles and all other books of religion admit them. In the birth of Krishna or Rama there was nothing unusual. They were not prophets of God, they were masters of action, love and sympathy. What Rama lacked, Krishna fulfilled. How pleasant is life if you live with those with whom you think you should live, and not merely for yourself. In the birth of Krishna this is demonstrated. God gives the life of all men in the Universe but lives with those who wish Him to live with them and not merely for themselves. So Krishna went to Brindaban though born in Muthara (Muttra).

"O be wiser, Thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart."

(WORDSWORTH).

Krishna was not the son of a king or born by the boon of sacrifice; he was beauty incarnate.

"Beauty—a living Presence of earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main—Why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day."

(WORDSWORTH).

The mythology of divine love is depicted in the churning of the ocean. The goddess of prosperity is Lakshmi, consort of Narayana, daughter of the illustrious sage Bhrigu and his wife Khyati. She was drowned in the ocean at the time of Indra's fall by the curse of the sage Durbasa, and she was recovered in the churning of the sea. In the figure of Narayana she is sitting at the feet as if kneading over the hood of the snake in the ocean. Ananta is the name of the snake on which Narayana is sleeping and on whose head, it is said, the earth rests. Ananta is the name of Balarama and the Mahabharata describes the death of Balarama when the snake came out of his body. The Mahabharata says in the Santi Parva that the goddess of prosperity left the Asuras and came to Indra*. The goddess of prosperity lives where there is no animosity towards men but truth, charity and mercy reign. Virtue and morality are the signs of divine love.

The Asuras and the Devas fought for the division of nectar. The fact is that the nectar of life lies in good conduct, it is not the gift of God. The goddess of prosperity lives with men of good conduct and such men are blessed with divine love—that is the lesson preached by the goddess Lakshmi. The Asuras, as long as they were virtuous, enjoyed the nectar, but when they became vicious they were hurled from the kingdom of Heaven. The place of Heaven and hell is in the

*The Mbh. Chapter CCXXVIII.

mind and soul, and there is no separate place assigned for each, for it is the culture of the mind which makes a man or a woman look up and not down, aspire and not despair. Divine love is all abandonment of self. A stranger when he sees a serpent is going to kill a man unaware, kills it, without being called upon to do so, through the hidden force of divine love, even ignoring the danger he runs should the snake, if not killed, attack him. The great poet Shakespeare says of true love:—

"Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no; it is an overfixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star of every wandering bark;
Whose worth's unknown although his height be taken
Love's not Time's fool though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come,
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out e'en to the edge of doom".

Love is not the fruit of passion. The great Epic demonstrates it in Draupadi. The love of youths Drupada and Drona ended in envy and dismemberment of Drupad's kingdom. To set it right Drupada performed the sacrifice for the birth of such children who would be able to recover the lost kingdom. This is the genesis of the great Epic in which the Pandavas figured. Draupadi, Dhristadyumna, etc., were born. Drupada was perhaps told by the sages that he should take the assistance of Sri Krishna, the master of Divine Love, in the marriage of Draupadi. True love represented in Draupadi is a friend of divine love, as from true love divine love comes. Divine love stepped in and said in the action:—

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments."

The marriage passed off and after it the goddess of prosperity Lakshmi blessed the Pandavas with the suzerainty of India. The goddess of prosperity is reflected in Draupadi. Even the Pandavas' worst enemy Durjodhana admitted it and wanted to deprive them of her.

"You should remember Arjuna had his famous bow and Bhima his mace, but it was the praiseworthy Draupadi who liberated the Pandavas, who were all made slaves at the game of dice "*

Draupadi was a fearless, cultured Indian princess who showed that she could stand on her own legs, could render great assistance to Yudhisthira and his brothers. She did not accuse Yudhisthira before

*Mbh. Udyoga Parva, Chapter CLX, verses 110-111.

his enemies or at home, her stand before the memorable Dice Hall could not but elicit praise from all. She demonstrated what true love is, she justified the action of her husband Yudhisthira, and stood by him in his worst miseries.

"Nor for reward, or any fee;
But like as thou has loved me,
I love, and ever will love thee,
Only as king of this my heart,
Only because my God thou art".
(S. WILBERFORCE.)

The friends of Durjodhana, headed by Karna, tried her fully by damning the Pandava king, but she proved by her conduct that love when repressed engenders power.

"The more thou damn'st it up, the more it burns:
The current that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou knowest, being stopped, impatiently doth rage;
But when his fair course is not hinderd'd stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage."
(SHAKESPEARE).

So Shakespeare corroborated her conduct. Violent passions cannot disturb the mind where true love is. Love guards against vice. Every transgression can be traced to the working of the evil passions in the human heart. It takes possession when the heart is vacant or vacillating. The mind, like the body, needs to be trained and equipped before it can use its powers in the most advantageous way. A man or woman when in love learns the art of thinking well, and consequently the natural powers come into play. He who is in love, sees every time he looks at the beloved object when he is absent and when he is near, drawing from his movements, eyes, speeches, writings and last though not least mind those virtues and attractions which he possesses.

The lover exhausts the stock of the beloved in expanding his soul. This is the root of self-sacrifice in true love. If a lover sacrifices his own pleasure for that of his beloved, he is a devotee at the temple of love, never self-possessed. Individuality is no longer his own foolish master, love craves a new and higher object, it inhales the celestial air of doing good to others and makes man or woman forget self-interest. Man becomes the sport of circumstance when he loses command over himself. The art of governing passions is the keynote of success in this vale of tears. Wealth, health, skill and knowledge can give little satisfaction to man or woman if one does not cultivate the control of one's senses. Love and true love can alone control the senses.

The ancient stories, perceiving the innumerable ills resulting from ungoverned passions, sought to extirpate them and reactions took place.

Sakuntala, Kripa, Drona, Vyasa are said to be the fruits of such re-actions. It is true that few possess the firmness to go against the laws of Nature. A plain, illiterate man does not fall into that error which a learned man does with the theories of subtle casuists who labour chiefly to show how one may approach sin without sinning. There were men who studied morality to make a show of their learning and in order not to live according to the accepted rules. When such men became the editors of the great Epic these things were introduced as something novel and mysterious to be in keeping with the greatness of the illustrious example prodigies. Draupadi did not escape in their hands as wife of the five Pandavas.

"The Gospel contains," says Mr. Locke, "so perfect a body of ethics that reason may be excused from any further inquiry, since she may find man's duty dearer and easier in revelation than in herself." Fortunately, such is not exactly the case with the great Epic.

The truth can be ascertained from the different versions of the different authors and editors, which are not all lost but are somehow preserved. It is of interest to mention here the cause of this departure from truth and rectitude and the mingling of religion and dissipation so contrary to each other. It is the usual practice among mankind from the growth of civilisation. The habit of lying owes its origin either to fear of punishment, love of gain, or the ambition to working upon the evil passions of man, making everything suitable to the tastes of the people and winning their admiration and applause. Aristotle's reply to a question as to what a man could gain by telling lies is very interesting and to the point.—"Not to be credited when he tells the truth." It is well-known that gross lies in trade are indulged in for gain and malice forges slander. Poets invent incidents and circumstances which did not actually take place only to embellish narratives to tell upon the imagination of the audience. The design was to display their importance. He who in his first attempt succeeds cannot but be strongly tempted to pursue his vile course. The beauty of the soul is temperance, courage and wisdom, from which divine love springs.

Material and moral prosperity depended on the virtuous conduct of man, and when he fell below that standard he was called Asura. War was inevitable when they fought for the right to own a kingdom by sheer force of physical power against moral force. It was a fight between uncommon physical and numerical strength against cultural, intellectual and spiritual power not so numerically great. The Philistine giant was killed by the stripling David with a small stone hurled from a sling. Krishna and Balarama were such striplings who killed Kansa, the son-in-law of the great king Jarasandha in a sacrifice, and they came

into the lime-light. Neither of them sat on the throne that fell vacant by the death of the usurper Kansa, but they made Kansa's father Ugrasen do so. The most powerful Jarasandha, hearing of his son's cruel fate, tried his level best to be revenged but failed.

Krishna thought of making alliance with his relatives, the Pandavas, who were sought to be destroyed by Durjodhana. They were all physically and intellectually strong, full of energy, ability and vigour and with a right title to the kingdom. Draupadi was the gift-horse with which the Pandavas' alliance with Drupada and Krishna was secured and that was the real beginning of the great fight. The Pandavas revenged the lac house incidents at the Swayambara festival of Draupadi by meteing out blows and thrusts of arms on Durjodhana and his friends, who made the lac house to destroy them, and secured the share of their paternal estate by the alliance of marriage with Draupadi. Krishna founded an empire at Dwarka. This was followed by the most important events, the killing of Jarasandha, the Nemean Lion of India, and the founding of an empire with a capital at Indraprastha (Old Delhi) by the Pandavas.

All these and Rajasuya were the height of glory of Krishna's intellectual powers and made the Pandavas famous for their martial spirit and chivalry. This is the subject matter of Adi Kanda, or the first part of the Mahabharata, where Krishna and the Pandavas were the real heroes of morality and love. Yudhisthira married Draupadi, and his brothers were the protectors of the queen and the kingdom. Draupadi's modesty and love were great and just, which made them free from falling together by the ears. The Ramayana at the end of the reading speaks of the greatest blessing on earth to make brothers live in unity. This also was the aim of the other work. and Draupadi by her good conduct and affectionate love towards the Pandavas achieved it in the Mahabharata. Yudhisthira alone was addressed as a husband and others as brothers-in-law, as appear in the addresses of Draupadi in the great Epic.

The marriage of Draupadi has direct and indirect relations in the Epic which have not as yet been seen.* The original marriage ceremony took place with Yudhisthira as the text testifies, but in philosophy it demonstrates the creation of the moral and spiritual world that real love cannot be personal but universal; when it is so, it unites men instead of separating them. The carnal love separates the brothers Sunda and Upasunda in the story of Tilottama and Bali and Sugriva.

* In the Appendix "C" where the texts in all the collections bearing on the subject as found by Dr. Sukthankar, Editor of the "Critical Edition of the Mahabharata" are given.

It is said in a Polish proverb that a woman draws more with a hair of her head than a yoke of oxen well harnessed, but the ancient Hindus declare that the joy of home depends on a good wife for the hearts of each other are joined by the angle of happiness. Such a wife was Draupadi so far as the home comforts and unity of the Pandavas were concerned, and there she acted in such a way that she did not make any difference between her husband Yudhisthira and his brothers—that was the illusion or Maya. The European poets sang and in their words the part Draupadi played may be said :—

"It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind
In body and in soul can bind."

(SCOTT).

"But to see her were to love her,
Love but her, and love for ever."

(BURNS.)

"O that the desert were my dwelling place,
With one spirit for my minister,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her."

(BYRON.)

"Her feet are tender, for she sets her steps,
Not on the ground, but on the heads of men."

(HOMER.)

The happiness of Yudhisthira was not his own individual happiness, but he was a man of the world whom the world can accept as the ideal king of men and his arms and armour were the five men and two women, *i.e.*, his four brothers and Krishna at the head and his mother, Kunti, and Draupadi. This is the real conception of the great Epic. The grouping of the picture has been of the utmost importance. How a given figure in a picture is affected and is altered by an artist as well as by the revisers is illustrated below.

Titian copied the Deity dividing Light from Darkness in the Sistine Chapel and used it in his picture of the battle of Cadore showing a General falling from his horse. Michael Angelo's picture of Samson was copied by Tintoret and Samson was converted into a Jupiter by the introduction of an eagle, thunder and lightening obliterating the jaw-bone of the ass. There had been several transformations and divisions of the Mahabharata of Vyasa and the Ramayana of Valmiki by various editors and rhapsodists. It is true that art tries to perfect ideals. Ruskin says :—

"Remembering always that there are two characters in which all greatness of Art consists first, the earnest and intense seizing of natural facts ; then the ordering

those facts by strength of human intellect, so as to make them, for all who look upon them, to the utmost serviceable, memorable, and beautiful. And thus great Art is nothing else than the type of strong and noble life; for as the ignoble person, in his dealings with all that occurs in the world about him, first sees nothing clearly, looks nothing fairly in the face, and then allows himself to be swept away by the trampling torrent and unescapable force of the things that he would not foresee and could not understand: so the noble person, looking the facts of the world full in the face, and fathoming them with deep faculty, then deals with them in unalarmed intelligence and unhurried strength, and becomes, with his human intellect and will, no unconscious nor insignificant agent in consummating their good and restraining their evil."

Poets paint in their words, Artists speak in their works and Law demonstrates the ethics of morality and the progress of ages. The customs and usages found injurious to the people were stopped and punishments were mentioned for the transgressors. There is no law of punishment in the Hindu institutes for marrying five husbands if ever that had been the custom amongst the Hindus. No idols or pictures or carvings found in India show that the five Pandavas were married to one Draupadi. The great work of Vyasa has been misused in the manner the artists used the masterpieces of Michael Angelo.

Love is the light of Heaven. Heaven's harmony is in love, the silent note of music and main energy of life. It illumines the darkness of heart within to find the dweller there, vibrates the chord of sentiment to sing the music of life and inspires man and woman to sacrifice everything to realise the truth behind the love of life. No man or woman is perfect unless love finds its way into the heart to fill it with true affection and eliminate all malice or envy. It justifies the name Ajatasatru, by which Yudhisthira was universally known and respected. The ethics of morality and love the great Epics of India teach, and the heroes and heroines who illustrate them are the real characters worthy of notice. The battles or exploits of warriors have never been the real themes of the Indian Epics as the majority of the European scholars took them to be.

Krishna represents the divine love of religion and Krishna or Draupadi the human devotion of love and sympathy, and Yudhisthira the universal love of a king to rule the heart of men and control his own selfish passions as well as to be a bright example to others. The past and its remembrance have important lessons which the Epics record to afford pleasure in the thought of those who suffered and established the kingdom of peace and love instead of raising inordinate cravings of flesh and blood. There must be the lesson of wisdom and humility in the presence of the spirit of God, which is the ethic of morality and love which leads man to eternity. Peace is the result of a disciplined and cultured mind where the spirit exults; when that spirit is united

with the universal spirit the question of eternity comes. This is the order of progress from the moral sphere to spiritual ascendancy of eternity. Man alone can do much for himself as he is placed in the midst of ever-changing incidents and events of life. It is the knowledge and power of heart within man which gives him peace in his faith, trust and love in Him whom the heart yearns to meet and the meeting place is the universal love which does not fight in the field of battle but only watches and helps the good.

Krishna represented universal love and Yudhisthira the disciplined and cultured mind in whom the unity of the universal spirit of love met and led him to eternity. This is the solution before the plot which Vyasa conceived and displayed in the great work.

The spirit of love is even within the dead earth, and the Hindus ascribe wealth and prosperity to mother earth. For earth men fight and so Sita was the daughter of mother earth and retired to her breast when Rama had to retire from the world. Sita assumed the lust of Ravana, Draupadi came out of the fire of sacrifice as a boon of god Narayana and destroyed not one king but a host of kings of India. Fire became the great weapon of men in the progress of time until fire-arms became the chief instruments of war. The invisible fire of love is more powerful than fire-arms. Siva, the great god of the material world, burnt to ashes the Hindu Cupid of Love. He transferred his place from body to mind. Love burns the mind of men and women, passion rots the soul within, and what excites it received the name of woman, *i. e.*, woe to man. Woman is at the bottom of all troubles of the material world. Troy was destroyed, likewise Ceylon, for the sake of a beautiful woman. Draupadi was not such a woman. No one could cast an evil eye upon her; neither for possession of her, nor for carrying her away was the great battle of Kurukshettra fought. Jayadratha, the brother-in-law of Durjodhana, it is said, carried her off from the camp but she was rescued on the way by the Pandavas. This story is incredible for the obvious reason that Draupadi was describing the features of each of the Pandavas as if Jayadratha was not known to them.

The Hindu ideal of God who rules the Universe does not favour everlasting perdition for Satan. The worst Satan has been emancipated by works of love and faith. Hindu Puranas describe them and the Epics follow them. Old Puranas had been lost in the ascendency of Buddhism. The new Puranas were revived at the time of Hindu revival. The Epics have thus become important sources of those revivals, and it was for that their incidents were recited in short in almost all the Puranas and to Vyasa was ascribed the authorship of them all. Sri Krishna, the

king-maker of Ancient India, whom the Mahabharata describes as the ideal hero of love, learning, intelligence and justice, first appeared subservient to God Narayana and then became an emblem of universal love. The empire of love he established at Dwarka, which he conceived in Brindaban in his younger days, at last took firm root in the kingdom of Yudhisthira, whom he established by his good counsel and superior wisdom.

EPIC AUTHORS AND EDITORS.

Professor Max Muller has admitted that

"the only sphere where the Indian mind found itself at liberty to act, to create, and to worship, was the sphere of religion and philosophy; and nowhere have religious and metaphysical ideas struck roots so deep in the mind of a nation as in India. The Hindus were a nation of philosophers. Their struggles were the struggles of thought; their past, the problem of creation; their future, the problem of existence. The present alone, which is the real and living solution of the problems of the past and the future, seems never to have attracted their thoughts or to have called out their energies. The shape which metaphysical ideas take amongst the different classes of society, and at different periods of civilisation, naturally varies from coarse superstition to sublime spiritualism. But, taken as a whole, history supplies no second instance where the inward life of the soul has so completely absorbed all the practical faculties of a whole people, and, in fact, almost destroyed those qualities by which a nation gains its place in history. It might therefore be justly said that India has no place in the political history of the world*...... An expedition like that of Alexander could never have been conceived by an Indian king, and the ambition of native conquerors, in those few cases where it existed, never went beyond the limits of India itself. But if India has no place in the political history of the world, it certainly has a right to claim its place in the intellectual history of mankind. The less the Indian nation has taken part in the political struggles of the world, and expended its energies in the exploits of war and the formation of empires, the more it has fitted itself and concentrated all its powers for the fulfilment of the important mission reserved to it in the history of the East †...... After primeval physiolatry, which was common to all the members of the Aryan family, had, in the hands of a wily priesthood, been changed into an empty idolatry, the Indian alone, of all the Aryan nations produced a new form of religion, which has well been called subjective, as opposed to the more objective worship of nature. That religion, the religion of Buddha, has spread far beyond the limits of the Aryan world, and, to our limited vision, it may seem to have retarded the advent of Christianity among a large portion of the human race."‡

One cannot agree that India has not influenced the political history of the world. Alexander's invasion of India was not a successful expedition so far as the conquest of India was concerned, yet the return of the expedition changed the political atmosphere of Western civilisation. The Greeks and the Romans introduced the Indian system and policy of warfare in their countries. The learned professor admitted that "no people certainly made a more favourable impression upon the Greeks than the Indians." And when we read the account of their moral and intellectual condition at the time of Alexander we are obliged to

*Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature", pages 30-31.
†Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature", pages 31-32.
‡Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature", page 32.

admit that if some of their good qualities are no longer to be met with among the Indians of later times, this is owing, not entirely to an original defect of character, but to that continual system of oppression exercised upon them by foreign conquerors, to whose physical power they submitted, while they could not help despising their masters as barbarians.

His views about the two Epic poems of India are worth recording as they show the angle of vision of the erudite Western Sanskrit scholar, to whom it must be admitted Indians are greatly indebted, though they may not necessarily agree with all his conclusions.

"If we examine the two Epic poems of India, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, we shall find it impossible to use them as authorities for the Vedic age, because we are not yet able to decide critically which parts of these poems are ancient, and which are modern and post-Buddhistic, or at least retouched by the hands of late compilers and editors. There are certainly very ancient traditions and early Vedic legends in both of these poems. Some of their heroes are taken from the same epic cycle in which the Vedic poetry moves. These, however, only form subjects for episodes in the two poems, while their principal heroes are essentially different in their character and manners. In fact, though there are remains of the Vedic age to be found in the Epic poems, like the stories of Urvasi and Pururavas, of Sakuntala and Dushmanta, of Uddalaka, Sunahsepha, Janaka Vaideha and particularly of the Vedic Rishis, like Vasistha, Visvamitra, Yajnavalkya, Dirghatamas, Kakshivat, Kavasha, and many others, yet this would only prove that the traditions of the Vedic age were still in the mouth of the people at the time when the Epic poetry of the Hindus was first composed, or that they were not yet forgotten in after times, when the Brahmans began to collect all the remains of Epic songs into one large body, called the Mahabharata. If we compare the same legends as exhibited in the hymns and Brahmanas of the Veda, and as related in the Mahabharata, Ramayana, or the Puranas, the Vedic version of them will mostly be found to be more simple, more primitive, and more intelligible than those of the Epic and Puranic poems. This is not meant as a denial that real Epic poetry, that is to say, a mass of popular songs, celebrating the power and exploits of gods and heroes, existed at a very early period in India, as well as among the other Aryan nations; but it shows that, if yet existing, it is not in the Mahabharata and Ramayana we have to look for these old songs, but rather in the Veda itself. In the collection of the Vedic hymns, there are some which may be called Epic, and may be compared with the short hymns ascribed to Homer. In the Brahmanas passages occur, in prose and verse, celebrating the actions of old kings*......There is no allusion to any of the titles of the Puranas or to the Ramayana in Vedic works, whether Brahmanas or Sutras. But as in the Sutras of Asvalayana the name of the Bharata, and according to some MSS. even the name of the Mahabharata, is mentioned, this may be considered as the earliest trace, not merely of single Epic poems, but of a collection of them. The age of Asvalayana, which will be approximately fixed afterwards, would, therefore, if we can rely on our MSS., furnish a limit below which the first attempt at a collection of a Bharata or Mahabharata ought not to be placed. But there is no hope that we shall ever succeed by critical researches in restoring the Bharata to that primitive form and shape in which it may have existed before or at the time of Asvalayana. Much has indeed been done by Professor Lassen, who, in his "Indian Antiquities," has pointed out characteristic marks by which the modern parts of the Mahabharata can be distin-

*Professor Max. Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pages 36-37.

guished from the more ancient; and we may soon expect to see his principles still farther carried out in a translation of the whole Mahabharata, which, with the help of all the Sanskrit commentaries, has been most carefully prepared by one of the most learned and laborious scholars of Germany".*

It is evident from the views of the eminent Western scholars that the Mahabharata contains historical matter of the greatest importance about Ancient India. Professor Max Muller says that the

"Epic tradition in the mouth of the people was too strong to allow this essential and curious feature in the life of its heroes (*viz.*, five brothers having a common wife) to be changed. However, the Brahmanic editors of the Mahabharata, seeing that they could not alter tradition on this point, have at least endeavoured to excuse and mitigate it. Thus we are told in the poem itself, that at one time the five brothers came home, and informed their mother that they had found something extremely precious. Without listening further, their mother at once asked them to divide it as brothers. The command of a parent must always be literally obeyed; and as Draupadi was their newly discovered treasure, they were obliged, according to the views of the Brahmans, to obey, and to have her as their common wife. Indian law givers call this a knotty point; they defend the fact, but refuse to regard it as a precedent."†

This knotty point of the Indian law-givers about Draupadi's marriage, which Western scholars and their co-religionists have reviled in their books, has been explained. The learned professor speaks of his admiration of the Sanskrit Scholars in his well-known book "Ancient Sanskrit Literature" in the following manner:—

"We may admire the delicate poetry of Kalidasa, the philosophical vigour of Kapila, the voluptuous mysticism of Jayadeva, and the Epic simplicity of Vyasa and Valmiki, but as long as their works float before our eyes like the mirage of a desert, as long as we are unable to tell what real life, what period in the history of a nation they reflect, there is something wanting to engage our sympathies in the same manner as they are engaged by the tragedies of Æschylus, or the philosophical essays of Cicero."‡

It is evident from this that the learned professor believed in the authorships of Vyasa and Valmiki of the two great Epics of India and the real life of Ancient India of the different periods is given as far as possible. He has given his ground for divine origin to the ancient national poetry as follows:—

"We can understand how a nation might be led to ascribe a superhuman origin to their ancient national poetry, particularly if that poetry consisted chiefly of prayers and hymns addressed to their gods. But it is different with the prose compositions of the Brahmanas. The reason why the Brahmanas, which are evidently so much more modern than the Mantras, were allowed to participate in the name of Sruti, could only have been because it was from these theological compositions, and not from the simple old poetry of the hymns, that a supposed divine authority could be derived for the greater number of the ambitious claims of the Brahmans. But, although we need not ascribe any weight to the arguments by which the Brahmans

*Professor Max. Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pages 42-43.
†Professor Max. Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," page 47.
‡Professor Max. Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pages 63-64.

endeavoured to establish the contemporaneous origin of the Mantras and Brahmanas, there seems to be no reason why we should reject as equally worthless the general opinion with regard to the more ancient date of both the Brahmanas and Mantras, if contrasted with the Sutras and the profane literature of India. It may easily happen, where there is a canon of sacred books, that later compositions become incorporated together with more ancient works, as was the case with the Brahmanas. But we can hardly imagine that old and genuine parts should ever have been excluded from a body of sacred writings, and a more modern date ascribed to them, unless it be in the interest of a party to deny the authority of certain doctrines contained in these rejected documents."*

This may apply equally to Epic literature. Both the Epics describe the fight between Vasistha and Visvamitra, which is also referred to in the Veda.

The original occupation of the Purohita may simply have been to perform the usual sacrifices; but, with the ambitious policy of the Brahmanas, it soon became a stepping-stone to political power.

"One of the greatest events in the life of Vasistha was the victory which King Sudas achieved under his guidance. But in the Mandala of the Vasisthas, the same event is sometimes alluded to as belonging to the past, and in one of the hymns ascribed to the same Vasistha we read: 'Comitting our sons and offspring to the same good protection which Aditi, Mitra, and Varuna, like guardians, give to Sudas, let us not make our gods angry.†...The original institution of a Purohita, as the spiritual advisor of a king or a chief, need not be regarded as the sign of a far advanced hierarchical system. The position of the Brahmans must have been a peculiar one in India from the very beginning. They appear from the very first as a class of men of higher intellectual power than the rest of the Aryan colonists; and their general position, if at all recognised, could hardly have been different from that of Vasistha in the camp of Sudas. The hymns, therefore, which only allude to a Purohita, or priests in general, need not be ascribed to a late age."‡

The descendants of the family of the well-known priests Vasistha and Bhrigu were the authors of the Indian Epics. Visvamitra was connected with Bhrigus and it is significant that the account given in the Mahabharata, which is quoted as a discourse between Arjuna and Chittraratha, has hardly any connection with the main subject of the Mahabharata. Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa seemed to have flourished in the Mantra period but is not entirely represented by the collection of ancient hymns. Such a work would be sufficient in itself to give a character to an age, and we might appeal, in the history of Ancient Greek literature, to the age of the Diaskeuasts.

A generation which begins to collect has entered into a new phase of life. Nations, like individuals, become conservative when they cease to trust implicitly in themselves, and have learnt from experience that they are not better than their fathers. But though the distinctive

*Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature" pages 76-77.
†Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature" pages 483.
‡Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature" pages 488-489.

feature of the Mantra period consisted in gathering the fruits of a bygone spring, this was not the only work which occupied the Brahmans of that age. Where poems have to be collected from the mouths of the people, they have likewise to be arranged. Corrections are supposed to be necessary; whole verses may have to be supplied. After collecting and correcting a large number of poems, many a man would feel disposed to try his own poetical powers; and if new songs were wanted, it did not require great talent to set them to the simple strains of the ancient Rishis. Thus we find in the Rig Veda that, after the collection of the ten Mandalas was finished, some few hymns were added, generally at the end of a chapter, which are known by the name of Khilas. We can hardly call them successful imitations of the genuine songs; but in India they seem to have acquired a certain reputation. They found their way into the Samhitas of the other Vedas; they are referred to in the Brahmanas; and though they are not counted in the Anukramanis, together with the original hymns, they are there also mentioned as recognised additions. It is admitted that Vyasa became illustrious as a classifier of the Vedas, entitling him to the name of Veda Vyasa, as is mentioned in the Mahabharata. Dr. Winternitz admitted it in his book quoting the text (Page 322, Note 2). He admitted

"that some elements of our present Mahabharata reach back into the Vedic period, and that much, especially in the didactic sections, is drawn from a literary common property, from which also Buddhists and Jainas (probably already in the 5th century B. C.) have drawn. Finally, it must still be mentioned, that not only the events described in the Epic, but also the innumerable names of kings and royal races, however historical some of the events and many names may appear, do not belong to Indian history in the true sense of the word. It is true that the Indians set the reign of Yudhisthira and the Great War of the Mahabharata at the beginning of the Kaliyuga, or Iron Age, *i. e.* 3102 B. C.; but this date for the beginning of the Kaliyuga is based upon the artificial calculation of Indian Astronomers, and the association of this date with the conflict of the Kauravas and Pandavas is, of course, quite arbitrary." *

The metre in which the Ramayana was written was used in the Vedas, yet credit was given to Valmiki as its founder. The fact is that Valmiki introduced the first ornate poem.

"With regard to language, style and metre, too, the various parts of the Mahabharata show absolutely no uniformity. It is in only quite a general sense that one can speak of 'Epic Sanskrit' as the language of the popular Epics. In reality the language of the Epic is in some parts more archaic, *i. e.*, more closely related to the Ancient Indian of the Vedic prose works, than in other parts. And beside liguistic phenomena which recall the Pali, and which can be called popular there are others which one is compelled to call solecisms, such as are often committed, by uneducated and inferior authors like the Purana composers. The style, too, can

* Dr. Winternitz' "A History of Indian Literature" pages 473-474.

only in a general sense be sa'd to be far removed from the so-called 'Kavya style', *i. e.* the style of the later ornate poetry, which is characterised by the excessive use of embellishments (Alamkaras). However, there is no lack of passages in the Mahabharata which remind us of this Kavya style. Beside these, we also find portions which retain the naive style of the old Itihasas, as they are related in the Brahmanas and Upanishads, while again in numerous other portions the most negligent Purana style prevails. As regards the metre, the Sloka which originated in the old Anustubh is certainly the metre par excellence. But there are earlier and later forms of this Sloka, which are all represented in the Mahabharata. Moreover, our Epic also contains old prose passages, in which the prose is occasionally rhythmical, and sometimes alternates with verses. Also of the Tristubh metre which is often used in the Mahabharata, though the sloka is about twenty times as frequent as the Tristubh, we find the ancient form, still similar to the Vedic form, as well as later forms; and even the elaborate metres of classical Sanskrit poetry are already to be found in certain parts of the Mahabharata.*... In the whole of Vedic literature there is no mention of a Mahabharata, though in Brahmanas and Upanishads there is frequent talk of Akhyana, Itihasa, Purana and Gatha Narasamsi. Even of the great, and probably historical, event which constitutes the central point of the Epic, the bloody battle in the Kuru field, the Veda says not a word, though in the Brahmanas this very Kuru field is so often mentioned as a place where gods and mortals celebrated great sacrificial feasts, that this event, if it had already taken place, would most certainly have been mentioned. It is true that Janmejoya, the son of Pariksit, and Bharata, the son of Dusmanta and of Sakuntala, already appear in the Brahmanas; and already in a Kuntapa song of the Atharvaveda Pariksit is praised as a peace loving king under whose rule the land of the Kurus prospered. In the works belonging to the Yajurveda there is frequent mention of Kurus and Panchalas or Kurupanchalas; and in connection with a sacrificial feast of the Kurupanchalas an anecdote is told in the Kathaka (X. 6) of Dhritarastra, the son of Vicitraviya. On the other hand, nowhere in the whole Veda is the name of Pandu or of his sons, the Pandavas, to be found, nowhere do such names as Durjodhana, Duhsasana, Karna, etc., appear. The name Arjuna does, it is true, occur in a Brahmana, but as a secret name of the god Indra. The Sankhayana-Srautasutra (XV. 16) is the first place where we find mention of a war in Kurukshettra which was disastrous for the Kauravas. In the Asvalayana-Grhvasutra, 'Bharata and Mahabharata' are mentioned in a list of teachers and sacred books which are honoured by libations at the end of the study of the Veda. Panini teaches the formation of the names 'Yudhisthira,' Bhima' and 'Vidura,' and the accent of the compound word 'Mahabharata' Patanjali, however, is the first to make definite allusions to the story of the battle between the Kauravas and the Pandavas.† ... The Indians call this Valmiki 'the first Kavi or author of ornate poetry' (adikavi) and like to call the Ramayana 'the first ornate poem' (adikavya). The beginnings of ornate Epic poetry do indeed lead back to the Ramayana, and Valmiki has always remained the pattern to which all later Indian poets admiringly aspired. The essential factor of Indian ornate poetry, of the so-called 'Kavya,' is that greater importance is attached to the form than to the matter and contents of the poem, and that so-called alamkaras, *i.e*, 'embellishments', such as similes, poetic figures, puns, and so on, are used largely, even to excess. Similies are heaped on similies, and descriptions, especially of nature, are spun out interminably with ever new metaphors and comparisons. We find the first beginnings of these and other peculiarities of the classical ornate poetry in the Ramayana. While we found in the

* Dr. Winternitz' "A History of Indian Literature." pages 461-462.

† Dr. Winternitz' "A History of Indian Literature," pages 470-471.

Mahabbharata a mixture of popular Epic and theological didactic poetry (Purana), the Ramayana appears to us as a work that is popular Epic and ornate poetry at the same time."*

The Uttarakanda of the Ramayana forms part of the Bharata Samhita, according to Dr. Winternitz :—

"The thread of this narrative in Book VII is constantly interrupted by the interpolation of numerous myths and legends. There we find again the familiar legends of Yajati and Nahusa (VII, 58f), of the slaying of Britra by Indra, who by this becomes guilty of Brahman-murder (VII, 84—87), of Urvasi the beloved of the gods, Mitra and Baruna, who in a marvellous manner begat the Rishis Vasistha and Agastya (VII, 56f.), of king Ila, who as the woman Ila bears Pururavas (VII, 87—90), and so on. Many truly Brahmanical legends with an exaggerated tendency compare well with similar stories of Book XIII of the Mahabharata Thus the story of the ascetic Sambuka, belonging to the Sudra caste, whose head Rama strikes off, for which he is commended by the gods, because a Sudra should not take it upon himself to practise asceticism; or of the god who is compelled to eat his own flesh because, in a former incarnation, he practised ascetism, but omitted to make presents to the Brahmans (VII, 73—81), and similar 'Edifying' legends. The whole of the book bears the character of the latest parts of the Mahabharata."†

The original Mahabharata is earlier than the Ramayana. It is clearly admitted by him :—

"The Hindus declare the Ramayana to be earlier than the Mahabharata, because, according to the traditional list of Vishnu's incarnations, the incarnation as Rama preceded that as Krishna. This argument has no force, because in the old, genuine Ramayana, as we have seen, Rama does not as yet appear as an incarnation at all. It is a fact, however, that allusions to Vasudeva (Krishna), Arjuna and Yudhisthira, already occur in Panini's grammar, whereas Rama is not mentioned either by Panini or Patanjali, nor in inscriptions of the pre-Christian era. It is likely, too, that the theory of incarnation arose out of the Krishna cult, and that the transformation of the hero Rama into an incarnation of Vishnu resulted only later, by analogy to the Krishna incarnation. A few scholars have declared the Ramayana to be the earlier of the two Epics, because the burning of widows does not occur in it, whilst it is mentioned in the Mahabharata. The fact of the matter however, is that in the old, genuine Mahabharata the burning of widows is just as much absent as in the genuine Ramayana, whilst there are allusions to it in the later portions of the Ramayana, though less frequent than in the Mahabharata.‡...'The orthodox Hindus themselves regard the Puranas as extremely ancient. They believe that the same Vyasa who compiled the Vedas and composed the Mahabharata was also, in the beginning of the Kaliyuga, the present age of the world, the author of the eighteen Puranas. But this Vyasa is a form of the exalted god Vishnu himself, 'for' (says the Vishnu-Purana) 'who else could have composed the Mahabharata? ' His pupil was the Suta Lomaharsana, and to him he imparted the Puranas. Thus the Puranas have a divine origin. And the Vedanta philosopher Sankara, for a proof of the personal existence of the gods, turns to Itihasas and Puranas, because

* Dr. Winternitz' "A History of Indian Literature," pages 475-476.

† Dr. Winternitz' "A History of Indian Literature," page 495.

‡ Dr. Winternitz' "A History of Indian Literature," page 505.

these, as he says, rest not only upon the Veda, but also upon sense-perception, namely on the perception of people like Vyasa, who personally spoke with the gods. * ... The Puranas are sacred books of the second grade. This is easily explained, for originally the Puranas were not priestly literature at all. The Sutas or bards were undoubtedly the creators and bearers of the oldest Purana poetry as well as of the Epic. This is also borne out by the circumstance that in almost all the Puranas the Suta Lomaharsana or his son Ugrasravas, 'the Sauti' *i.e.*, 'the son of the Suta', appears as narrator. This is so much the case that Suta and Sauti are used almost as proper names in the Puranas. But the Suta was certainly no Brahman, and he had nothing to do with the Veda". †

Dr. Monier Williams holds that the original Mahabharata is one century older than the Ramayana (page 319 "Indian Wisdom") and his views about its authorship and editions are as follows:—

"The great Epic, however, is not so much a poem with a single subject as a vast cyclopædia or thesaurus of Hindu mythology, legendary history, ethics, and philosophy. The work, as we now possess it, cannot possibly be regarded as representing the original form of the poem. Its compilation appears to have proceeded gradually for centuries. At any rate, as we have already indicated (pages 319-20), it seems to have passed through several stages of construction and reconstruction, until finally arranged and reduced to orderly written shape by a Brahman or Brahmans, whose names have not been preserved. The relationship which the original Brahman compiler bore to the scattered legends and lays of India, many of them orally transmitted until transferred to the Mahabharata, was similar to that borne by Pisistratus to the Homeric poems. But the Hindus invest this personage, whoever he was, with a nimbus of mystical sanctity, and assert that he was also the arranger of various other celebrated religious works, such as the Vedas and Puranas. He is called Vyasa, but this is, of course, a mere epithet derived from the Sanskrit verb *vy-as*, meaning 'to dispose in regular sequence', and therefore would be equally applicable to any compiler. ‡ ... Professor Lassen, in his 'Indische Alterthumskunde' (II. 499, new edition), considers that it may be proved from an examination of the Introduction to the Mahabharata that there were three consecutive workings-up (bearbeitung) of that poem by different authors. The first or oldest version, called simply Bharata, which contained only 24,000 verses, began with the history of Manu, the progenitor of the Kshatriya or military class (Adi-parvan 3126), and a short section—describing the pedigree of Vyasa, and how he appeared at the Snake-sacrifice, and how, at the request of Janmejoya, he commissioned Vaisampayana to relate the story of the strife between the Pandavas and Kauravas (I. 2208 etc.)—might have formed the introduction (einleitung) to this oldest Bharata. The second reconstruction or recasting of the poem—thought by Professor Lassen to be identical with the Itihasa mentioned in Asvalayana's Grihyasutras, and recited at Saunaka's horse-sacrifice—took place about 400 B. C. It began with the history of king Vasu, whose daughter Satyavati was mother of Vyasa; and the section called Paushya (I.661), the antiquity of which is indicated by its being almost entirely in prose, might have served as its introduction. The section called Pauloma (I.851), probably formed the commencement of the third reconstruction of the great Epic, which he considers must have preceded the era of Asoka. Vivyasa Vedan Yasmat sa tasmad Vyasa iti smritah (I.2417). It may seem strange that the compilation of wholly different works composed at very different epochs, such as the Vedas, Mahabharata and Puranas undoubtedly were, should be

* Dr. Winternitz "A History of Indian Literature", page 527.

† Do. Do. Do. page 528.

‡ Dr. Monier Williams' "Indian Wisdom" pages 371-72.

attributed to the same person; but the close relationship supposed by learned natives to subsist between these productions, will account for a desire to call in the aid of the same great sage in their construction". *

It is necessary to mention here that all the Hindu Puranas and Upapuranas unanimously hold that Vyasa and Valmiki were the authors of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, respectively. There can hardly be much difference between the unanimous tradition recorded in the Puranas and the unbiassed views of the European scholars. It is admitted by all that Veda Vyasa, the author of the original Mahabharata, cannot be the author of the current Mahabharata, wherein Vyasa's work was spoilt by the different editors and revisers and rhapsodists from time to time. The actual incidents were altered with the introduction of fictitious characters to produce a dramatic effect on the audience. They either introduced new matter in the texts of the Mahabharata or altered them to suit their object without any regard to truth, religion or law.

It is not generally known what is the real meaning of the word 'GO', which is mentioned in the Mahabharata along with Brahmana, for whose benefit it was written. Besides, Vasistha is said to have defeated Viswamitra through his Kama Dhenu (GO) or wish cow.

"Now the go (-stoma). By means of the Cow (-stoma), the Gods drove the Asuras away from these worlds. He who knows this, drives his rival away from these worlds. Because they, the Gods, pushed (Agovayan) away the Asuras from these worlds, thence its name 'GO'. He who knows this, pushes away his evil rival.'†

It is evident from these quotations that the fight between Visvamittra and Vasistha was more imaginary than real and the power of the Brahmanas rested with the successful rites and sacrifices to win success in the world and to be blessed with a good son and heir. Manu clearly defined that the system of Niyoga was not practised by the twice-born people and the sages cannot be accused of it.

In the Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, it is said that Vasistha was instructed by Hiranya Garbha (Brahma), and from him Narada learnt.

"This knowledge was acquired from Hiranyagarbha by the great Rishi Vasistha. From that foremost of Rishis, *viz.*, Vasistha, it was acquired by Narada. From Narada I have acquired that knowledge which is truly at one with the eternal Brahma. Having heard this discourse of great import, couched in excellent words, do not, O foremost of the Kurus, give way any longer to grief." ‡

It is again said in Chapter CCCXL.

"Having won the high favour that he had solicited, Narada also, gifted with great energy, then proceeded in all haste to the retreat called Vadari, for seeing Nara

* Dr. Monier William's, (Indian Wisdom) page 372, footnote.

† Pancavimsa Brahmana, page 428, para. 1—4.

‡ The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, page 485, verses 45-46, Chapter CCCIX.

and Narayana. This great Upanishad, quite of a piece with the four Vedas, and the Sankhya-Yoga, and called by him by the name of the Pancharatra Scriptures, and recited by Narayana himself with his own mouth, was repeated by Narada before a large audience in the residence of Brahman (his sire) in exactly the same way in which Narayana had recited it and in which he had heard it from his own lips .... Bhisma continued:—I have now recounted to you the discourse that was recited by Narada. That narrative has come down from person to person from very ancient times. I heard it from my father who formerly recounted it to me..... .. He knows that Narayana is the Supreme Soul, that He is the Supreme Lord, that He is the Creator of Brahman himself. Narada recited this very ancient narrative, which is perfectly consistent with the Vedas, to that assembly of Rishis crowned with ascetic success that came to the abode of Brahman. The god Suryya, having heard that narrative from those Rishis crowned with ascetic success, repeated it to the sixty-six thousands of Rishis, O king, of purified souls, that follow in his train. And the Sun, the deity that imparts heat to all the worlds, repeated that narrative to those Beings also, of purified souls, that have been created (by Brahman) for always travelling in the van of the Sun. The great Rishis who follow in the Sun's train, O son, repeated that excellent narrative to the deities assembled on the breast of Meru. That best of ascetics, *viz.*, the regenerate Asita, then, having heard the narrative from the gods, repeated it to the Pitris, O king of kings. I heard it from my father Shantanu, O son, who recited it to me formerly. Myself having heard it from my father, I have repeated it to you, O Bharata."*

It is repeated at the end of Chapter CCCXXXIV.

"The celestial Rishi Narada and the great Yoging Vyasa had again and again told all this to me in days of yore when the subject was suggested in course of conversation. That person devoted to tranquility who hears this sacred history directed with the subject of Liberation is sure to acquire the highest end." †

There is a clear reference to Rama as the incarnation of Narayana and the sages Ekata and Dwita appearing as powerful monkeys as his allies, the great heroes of the Ramayana in Chapter CCCXXXVII. The sages Ekata, Dwita and Treta wanted to see Narayana, but were told to wait for the purpose.

"O foremost of twice-born ones, you have a great duty to perform. After the expiration of this the golden age, when the Treta age comes in course of the Vivaswat cycle, a great calamity will befall the worlds. You Munis, you shall then have to help the gods."‡

The link is continued in the next Chapter CCCXL.

"Towards the end of Treta and the beginning of Dwapara, I shall take birth as Rama the son of Dasaratha in Ikshaku's race. At that time, the two Rishis, *viz.*, the two sons of Prajapati, called by the names of Ekata and Dwita, will on account of the injury done by them to their brother Trita, have to take birth as monkeys, losing the beauty of the human form. Those monkeys that shall take birth in the race of Ekata and Dwita, shall become endued with great power and mighty energy and will equal Shakra himself in power. All those monkeys, O twice-born

* The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, page 548, Chapter CCCXL, verses 106—108, 133, 113—119.

† The Mahabharata, verses 40-41, Shanti Parva, page 533.

‡ The Mahabharata, verses 53-54, Shanti Parva, page 540.

one, will become my allies for performing the work of the gods. I shall then kill the dreadful king of the Rakshasas, that wretch of Pulastya's race, *viz.*, the fierce Ravana that thorn of all the worlds, together with all his children and followers."*

That Rama is Narayana's incarnation is clearly mentioned in the Ramayana Book I, Canto XVI. In Uttarakanda, Book VII, Canto 32, verse 11, Narayana was appealed to by Indra to kill Ravana. In the same book, Canto 84, Satrughna, brother of Rama, heard the true account of Rama made by Valmiki in verse 14. After the disappearance of Sita, Brahma appears to Rama in 111 Canto of the same book giving out that Valmiki "has prepared a Kavya, which, when you will hear, let you know who were you, what you did and what you will do, where everything is said." The Uttarakanda is therefore the prologue of the first six books of the Ramayana. The Narayana edition of the Mahabharata describes the four forms of righteousness, Nara, Narayana, Hari and Krishna.

"During the epoch of the self-created Manu, the eternal Narayana, the Soul of the universe, was born as the son of Dharma in a quadruple form, *viz.*, as Nara, Narayana, Hari, and the self-creator Krishna."†

The Ramayana says the sons of Dasaratha were the four incarnations of Narayana.

"When wisest Vishnu thus had given
His promise to the Gods of heaven,
He pondered in his secret mind
A suited place of birth to find.
Then he decreed, the lotus-eyed,
In four his being to divide,
And Dasaratha, gracious king,
He chose as sire from whom to spring."‡

This establishes the Epic inter-relations and its source, as well as the aim of establishing the worship of true God, the eternal soul, or Purusha Vasudeva or Narayana. Vyasa, while instructing his son, referred to a work then existing where the duties superior to all have been laid down by the ancient sages in Chapter CCL (Shanti Parva), verse 2. In a previous Chapter CCXLVI, Vyasa said to his son that he had prepared a book for his instruction as follows:—

"This treatise, O son, intended for your instruction, is the essence of all the Vedas. The truths expounded in it cannot be understood by the help of inference alone or by that of mere study of the scriptures. One must understand it himself by the help of faith. By churning the Riks contained in all religious works and in all treatises based on truth, as also the ten thousand Riks, this ambrosia has been acquired. As butter from curds and fire from wood, so this has been raised for the sake of my son,—this which forms the knowledge of all truly wise men. This treatise, O son,

* The Mahabharata, verses 82-85, Shanti Parva, page 547.

† The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXXV, page 583, verses 8-9.

‡ Mr. Griffith's "The Ramayana of Valmiki' page 26, Book I, Canto XV.

fraught with solid instruction, is intended for Brahmana who having studied the Vedas, have become house-holders. It should never be delivered to one who is not of tranquil soul, or one who is not self controlled, or one who has not practised penances. It should not be delivered to one who is not conversant with the Vedas, or one who does not humbly wait upon his preceptor, or one who is not shorn of malice, or one who is not possessed of sincerity and candour, or one who is of reckless conduct. It should never be delivered to one whose intellect has been consumed by disputation, or one who is vile or low. This treatise containing the quintessence of duties, should be communicated to that person, however, who is possessed of fame, or who deserves praise, or who is of tranquil soul, or possessed of ascetic merit, to a Brahmana who is such to one's son or dutiful disciple, but on no account should it be delivered to others. If any person gives away the entire Earth with all her treasures to one coversant with truth, the latter should still consider the gift of this knowledge as very much superior to that gift." *

Then he describes a subject which perhaps was not treated in his book. It is this :—

"I shall now describe to you a subject which is a greater mystery than this, a subject connected with the Soul, which is above the ordinary understandings of human beings, which has been seen by the foremost of Rishis, what has been treated in the Upanishadas, and which forms the treatise of your enquiry." †

The book in question, which he referred to his son, seems to have been mentioned in the table of contents in the version of Sanjaya (verses 220 and 230, Adi Parva, Chapter I). It was a book being a discourse between Narada and king Saivya, who was afflicted with much grief at the loss of his children, where the history of the twenty-four ancient kings of great repute, who could not escape the hands of death, was given. Vyasa recited it to Dhritarastra when he was afflicted with great sorrow at the loss of his sons in the Great War of which Sanjaya was reminding the old king. It was said that the great Dvaipayana composed a holy Upanishada on these facts and it was published by the learned and sacred bards in the Puranas (verse 250). The book in question did not deal with the Pandavas or the Kurus but the twenty-four kings named in the discourse of Narada, who are as follows :—

(1) Saivya, (2) Srinjaya, (3) Suhotra, (4) Rantideva, (5) Kakshivanta, (6) Damana, (7) Valhaka, (8) Sarjati, (9) Ajita, (10) Nala, (11) Visvamittra, (12) Ambarisha, (13) Marutta, (14) Manu, (15) Ikshaku, (16) Gaya, (17) Bharata, (18) Parasurama, (19) Rama, (20) Sasabindu, (21) Bhagiratha, (22) Kartabirjya, (23) Janmejoya and (24) Yayati.

But besides these Vyasa mentioned the names of other kings, with Puru, Kuru, etc., who were equally powerful and virtuous but could not escape death, whereas the sons of Dhritarastra were wicked, envious and avaricious and yet their death could not affect the wise, intelligent

* The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXLVI, page 373, verses 13–20, Shanti Parva.

† The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXLVI, page 373 verse 21, Shanti Parva.

and learned, especially when everything was done for their safety and none could avert the decrees of fate by anything. Whatever time creates, it also destroys. They formed the theme of Vyasa's Upanishada. It is also mentioned in the table of contents that Vyasa composed at first a poem of 8,800 verses which could not be understood even by his son Suka or Sanjaya (verses 81-82, Chapter I, Adi Parva), so he revised it and made it of 24000 verses. It is evident that Vyasa was guided by Narada's book or discourse on the twenty-four kings to overcome the grief of king Saivya. It is clearly stated in the real introduction of the Mahabharata in the Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXLVII, verses 8—11 as follows :—

"Vaishampayana said :—He who is our preceptor, *viz.*, the Rishi Vyasa, the son of Gandhavati, has himself recited this narrative to us about the glory of Narayana, that glory which is the highest and which is immutable. I heard it from him and have recited it to you exactly as I heard it, O sinless one. This religion, with its mysteries and its abstract of details, was won by Narada, O king, from that Lord of the universe, *viz.*, Narayana himself. Even such are the particulars of this great religion. I have, before this, O foremost of kings, explained it to you in the Hari-Gita, with a brief reference to its ordinances. Know that the island-born Krishna, otherwise called Vyasa, is Narayana on Earth. Who else than He, O foremost of kings, could compile such a work as the Mahabharata? Who else than that powerful Rishi could describe the diverse kinds of duties and religion for the observance and adoption of men."*

Souti recites it again, as it should be, in the introduction in his version in the same chapter, verse 15, as follows :—

"Narada had recounted it to Vyasa, the great preceptor, and the sons of Pandu heard from him in the presence of Krishna and Bhisma."

Again it is mentioned in Chapter CCCXLIX (verses 81—88).

"When it becomes able to abstain entirely from acts, the twenty-fifth, *i. e.*, the individual Soul, succeeds in attaining to the foremost of Beings which is highly subtle, which is invested with the quality of Goodness, and which is fraught with the essences symbolised by the three letters of the alphabet (*viz.*, A. U. and M.). The Samkhya system, the Aranyaka Veda, and the Pancharatra scriptures, are all identical and form parts of one whole. This is the religion of those who are devoted whole-mindedly to Narayana,—the religion that has Narayana for its Soul. As waves of the ocean, rising from the ocean, rush away from it only to return to it in the long run, so various sorts of knowledge, originating from Narayana, return to Narayana in the end. I have thus explained to you, O Son of Kuru's race, what the religion of Goodness is. If you be qualified for it, O Bharata, do you practise that religion duly. Thus did the highly-blessed Narada explain to my preceptor,—the Island-born Krishna —the eternal and immutable course called Ekanta, followed by the Whites as also by Yatis. Pleased with Dharma's son Yudhisthira, Vyasa imparted this religion to king Yudhisthira the just, who was endued with great intelligence. Derived from my preceptor I have also communicated it to you. O best of kings, this religion is, for these reasons, highly difficult of practice. Others, hearing it, become as much stupi-

* The Mahabharata, Chapter CCCXLVII, verses 8—11, page 571, Shanti Parva.

fied as you have allowed yourself to be. It is Krishna who is the protector of the universe and its beguiler. It is He who is the destroyer and the cause, O King."*

About his birth it was said he was born of the speech of Narayana "Bho," whose original name was Saraswata but who passed by the name of Apantara-tamas. (CCCL. Verses 37—40 and 57-58, Shanti Parva, p. 582). The sage Apantaratamas was said to be the preceptor of the Vedas and was called by the name of Prachina-Garbha (CCCL, verse 65). There is a great resemblance in the number of verses (24000) in the two Indian Epics. (Ramayana Bk. VII, Uttarakanda, 107 Canto, verse 25). Vyasa is said to have composed originally a poem called Bharata in 24000 verses, exclusive of episodes, where he described

"the divinity of Krishna, the goodness of the sons of Pandu against the evil conduct of the sons of Dhritarastra, the virtue of Gandhari, constancy of Kunti, and wisdom of Bidura as well as the greatness of the Kuru race".†

Valmiki was said to be the tenth son of Paracheta (Jim Canto 109, verse 18). Nor is this all. It mentions two places, Vaijayanta and Pratisthana, in Uttarakanda, Canto 65, verse 8, and Canto 66, verse 26, respectively, as the seats of Nimi and Pururava, the well-known progenitors of the Royal family. Vaijayanta was near the hermitage of Goutama. In the Mahabharatâ CCCLI, verses 9-10, mention is made of a king of Vaijayanta where the illustrious god Brahman used to pass his time engaged in thinking on the course of spiritual science. Janaka, king of that place, was famous for his spiritual emancipation and learning and his discourses formed the important lessons of the Mahabharata.

It is evident that the Epics bore a great resemblance in every way. The moral was also the same (VII, Canto 62, verses 11-12). There is also a very important introduction of the Ramayana to be found connected with Narada in the Uttarakanda Ramayana, Book VII, XLVI Canto, like the Mahabharata, with white mountain residents and their worshipped deity Narayana and Ravana's decision to fight him. Sita was kept in Ceylon like a mother by Ravana. This is the discourse of Sanat Kumar to Narada and such a discourse is also extant in the Mahabharata. What is more, it is said that it should be read at the time of celebrating the Shraddha ceremony. The Mahabharata's verse containing the contending characters is:

"Durjodhana is a great tree created out of passion, Karna is its trunk; Sakuni is its branches; Dushasana is its fruit and flowers, and weak Dhritarastra is its root. Yudhisthira is a great tree, created out of virtue and religion; Arjuna is its trunk; Bhima is its branches; two sons of Madri are its flowers and fruits, and Krishna, Brahma, and Brahmanas are its roots."‡

* The Mahabharata, Chapter CCCXLIX, Shanti Parva, page 580, verses 81-88.

† The Mahabharata (Adi Parva, Chapter 1, verses 99-100).

‡ The Mahabharata (Adi Parva, Chapter I, verses 108-109, page 4.

As a Mantra this is even now recited in Shraddha ceremonies along with the Birata Parva and Gita.

Narada was not only an interlocutor or adviser in the Brahmanas and Epics but was the author of many sacred books of Ancient India as well as one of the law-givers. Narada was the most learned and revered celestial sage and was closely connected with the authorship of the Epics. It is said that different men became the authors or reciters of the Mahabharata. It was Narada to the Devaloka, Asita-Devala to the Pitriloka, Suka to the Gandharvas, Yakshas and Rakshasas and Vaisampayana to mankind. This means nothing but that the spiritual part of the book was treated by Narada. In the Brahmanas there are legends of great human interest. Aitareya is one of the most important of the two Brahmanas attached to the Rig Veda. King Harish Chandra's story on the question of a son is important and Narada spoke on the important topic of having a son in Chapter III, Book VII of Aitareya Brahmana, translated by Dr. Macdonell as follows:—

> "Food is man's life and clothes afford protection,
> Gold gives him beauty, marriages bring cattle;
> His wife's a friend, his daughter causes pity;
> A son is like a light in highest Heaven."*

This was the age of the Brahmanas when human sacrifice was prohibited by higher knowledge and through the power of concentration in a prayer of Sunahshepa, whom Visvamittra adopted as his son on finding him fit and worthy for the post of a priest. In the Epic age in Ancient India, Narada became the consoler of kings and sages who were aggrieved by the loss of their children. Narada appeared altogether in a different role. Vyasa is called Dvaipayana-Vyasa, to whom divine Brahma appeared, and the contents of his poem were disclosed as follows:—

> "It contains the mystery of the Vedas and other subjects that have been explained by me; it contains the various hymns of the Vedas, Upanishadas with their Angas. And a compilation of the Puranas, and the history which has been composed by me and named after the three divisions of time, namely, Past, Present and Future."†

But later on in verse 94, where he is called Krishna-Dvaipayana, he appeared as the father of Dhritarastra, Pandu and Vidura and did not publish his book till they died. This is absolutely contradictory to all that is disclosed in the Mahabharata. The quotations given just before on the point need no further repetition.

The Mahabharata still enjoys a place of honour in the religious ceremonies of the Hindus, especially in Bengal. Even illiterate ladies

*Dr. A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," page 208.
†The Mahabharata, page 3, Adi Parva, verses 62-65

can recite the poems of Kalidasa; which they have learnt by heart, and can discourse on the subjects of the Mahabharata. The rhapsodists have almost disappeared, but Jatras enliven people with stories of the Epic, which formed the innocent religious amusement of the Hindus. If such a book is traduced it can better be imagined than described how it hurts the sentiments of the Hindus. The author Vyasa is still considered as the true incarnation of God and he is worshipped in the heart of hearts of all Hindus. They do not believe him to be of impure birth, which the enemies of all great men ascribe to them unjustly. The greatness of a man is to be judged by the gravity of his enemies. Vyasa and Valmiki, as the authors of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, are instilled in the minds of the Hindus, male and female, young and old, literate and illiterate, if the truth be told. However, an honest attempt to arrive at the truth is being made as far as practicable.

The current Mahabharata begins with Sounakas twelve years sacrifice and with Souti reciting the Mahabharata there. It is not mentioned what sacrifice it was and in whose honour it was held and for what purpose, but so far as it can be ascertained from its close resemblance, it was a twelve year rite of Prajapati, whose description is given here below :—

"Three years consisting of nine-versed-days; three years of fifteen-versed, three years of seventeen-versed, three years of twenty-one-versed days. (This is the twelve-years-rite of Prajapati. By means of this (sattra), Prajapati came into the state of setting in motion the whole (universe). They who perform this (sattra) come into the (state of) setting in motion the whole (universe). In that three years are nine-versed, the nine-versed (stoma) being splendour and priestly lustre, they obtain splendour and priestly lustre. In that three years are fifteen-versed, the fifteen-versed (stoma) being might and strength, they obtain might and strength. In that three years are seventeen-versed, the seventeen-versed (stoma; being food, they obtain food. In that three years are twenty-one-versed, the twenty-one-versed (stoma) being a firm support, they obtain, at the end of the sacrifice, a firm support. By means of this (sattra), the inhabitants of Naimisa throve in all possible ways. They who undertake this rite thrive in all possible ways. They broke off the sattra, after the seventeen-versed years. They said: 'He who among our progeny will thrive he shall finish this sattra.' Therefore, the Brahmins perform this sattra, wishing to finish it."*

The sacrifice referred to therein was the snake sacrifice of Janmejoya. It has been shown that this Janmejoya could not be Janmejoya Parikshit, for if he was Bhisma could not have cited the discourse as an ancient account for he died long before Janmejoya Parikshit's time. There is also mention of the great kings ascending to Heaven for their sacrificè of great merit in Chapter CCXXXIV (Shanti Parva) and

* Panchavimsa Brahmana, page 631, Chapter XXV, para 5.

amongst them the work of Janmejoya is mentioned as follows in the version of Vyasa :—

"By giving away her ear-rings, Savitri, and, by giving away his own body king Janmejoya both proceeded to high regions of felicity."*

"Sudas's Vasistha is not alluded to in Pouranic tradition, but is mentioned in three stories in the Epic, if he was the Vasistha who is connected with Samvarana in them, namely, how Samvarana was driven out of his kingdom of Hastinapura by as Panchala king (who was Sudas) and after obtaining 'Vasistha's' aid recovered his kingdom. There was a long interval with many kings between Sudas (Sudasa) of N. Panchala and Shantanu, and it is impossible that Sakti's son Parasara of Sudas' time could have been Vyasa's father. Vyasa then was the son of a Parasara, but not of Para s Saktya. H ce there must have been two Parasaras."†

Sameness of name was well-known among kings and princes, for it is expressly declared that there were a hundred Prativindhyas, Nagas, Haihayas, Dhritarastras, Brahmadattas, Paulas, Svetas, Kasis and Kusas, eighty Janmejoyas, a thousand Sasabindus and two hundred Bhismas and Bhimas : also that there were two Nalas, one king of Ayodhya and the other the hero of the 'Story of Nala', So there were two famous Arjunas, Kartavirya and Pandava, and a third in Rig Veda i, 222, 5." ‡

"The Vedarthadipika on the same hymn tends to confirm this doubt, for it specifies 'Vasistha' as Maitravaruni, calls the nine others 'sons of Vasistha,' yet makes no reference to Parasara, who as author of 14 verses was more important than any of them, thus suggesting that it was not clear who this Parasara was. Those nine Vasisthas were not all sons of one Vasistha, for Upamanyu was Indrapramati's grandson, as will appear, and the Vedarthadipika says they composed their verses all quite independently.'§

The family of Brihaspati performed a thirty-six year sacrifice and were blessed with ten sons. (Panchavimsa Br. XXV. 7, p. 632). It is said whoever undertook this rite, ten strong sons were born to him. There is no wonder that five Pandavas were born to Pandu by performance of a rite.

That erudite Indian student of the Mahabharata, Professor Vaidya, in his history of Sanskrit Literature, Vedic period, says :—

"Badarayana is an Angirasa and not a Vasistha and hence is different from Dvaipayana Vyasa, who is a Parasara or Vasistha. But the Pravaras are the same in both of them ; and they began with Bhrigu, who, though not one of the Saptarshis, seems to be the oldest or highest Rishi as all Pravara enumerations begin with him."‖

His ground for holding this view is not tenable, as he quotes Gita in the version of Krishna, who was descended from the Bhrigu and therefore he naturally called himself "amongst the sages he is Bhrigu". Besides, he himself mentions later on in page 83 :

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* The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CCXXXIV, page 355, verse 24.

† Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," pages 210 and 211.

‡ Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, page 130.

§ Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 212.

‖ C. V. Vaidya's "History of Sanskrit Literature" Vedic Period." page 80. Chapter VI.

"Parasaras, whose Pravara is composed of Parasara, Sakti and Vasistha (all Rig Vedic Rishis), are said to be of various colours, *viz.*, Krishna (black), Gour (white), Nila (blue), Sveta (white) and Shyama (dark), and under each head five new Gotras are given in Anusotubh verses. A family is mentioned which is Vasistha by day and Kasyapa by night and their Pravara is given as Kasyapabatsurbasistha. This is absurd, as Pravara always indicated descent and not discipleship."*

If it is so, according to his own view, it must follow that when the Pravara of Badarayana and Dvaipayana Vyasa is the same they cannot be different.

"The Panini Gotra is given under Vatsas and Bhrigu Pancha-Pravara. This makes this list later than Panini or 800 B. C., for Panini is not a Gotra under any other list. Valmiki is also given under the same Gotra heading. Dirghatama is an Angirasa Kakshivata and Ushanas is an Angirasa Gautama; Sungha is a Bharadvaja and Koutsa is an Angirasa Yauvanasva. Asvalayana has one Pravara only *viz.*, Vasistha, and Paippaladas are Kundina Vasisthas." †

It is evident that Apantaratama is called Narayana's incarnation and was Badarayana, who in a later edition of the Mahabharata was designated as Dvaipayana Vyasa. The said Apantaratama was called Angirasa in the edition of the Bharata published by Brihaspati and nothing else, as there is a clear mention that Brihaspati did so in the Mahabharata. The Purusha Sukta X 90 is attributed to Narayana and it seems to distinguish the deity Narayana from Nara; this hymn is connected with Nara The Mahabharata mentions four Gotras, and excluded Goutama, who plays so important a part in the Epics, and for this whatever he says cannot be taken as gospel truth. Nor would it be right to construe or infer that they were the only family of priests who had influence on the Royal families of India who ruled. It is impossible to agree with the learned Vaidya as well as to ascribe imaginary authorship to the tenth Mandala simply because the authors are Kavasha Ailusha (X31) Aruna Vaitahavya. His conclusion that Badarayana Vyasa, author of the Vedanta Sutras, was different from Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa is not supported by cogent reasons and is against Indian tradition, which he himself admits in page 51 as follows:—

"The Indian tradition, therefore, namely that Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa made the Vedic compilations before the Satapatha, the oldest Brahmana, was composed in about 3000 B. C., may be accepted as reliable. We cannot further hold that the Rig Veda in its compiled form was before the authors of the Yaju's formulæ or Saman verses. For these two were also collected into Samhitas by Vyasa at the same time from the floating material then existing. These two Vedas, no doubt, contain many verses from the Rig Veda almost everywhere; but it is not necessary to suppose that they take them from the compiled Rig Veda. They could do so from hymns as they then separately existed among the Indo-Aryans".

* C V. Vaidya's "History of Sanskrit Literature" Vedic Period, page 83.
† C. V. Vaidya's "Histor. of Sanskrit Literature" Vedic Period, page 85.

"While accepting the tradition of the compilation of the Vedas by Vyasa we may, however, reject that part of it which credits him with compiling the Atharva text also, for we have seen that originally there were three Vedas only, the Atharva Veda being put together later".

"The Sukla Yajurveda arose after Vyasa had compiled the Rig Veda, the Krishna Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda, as its very tradition (which will be given later on) indicates.*"

It is evident Badarayana Vyasa is only distinct from Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa so far as the composition of the books Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata are concerned. Badarayana was the title of Vyasa when he published Brahma Sutra and published the Mahabharata and not as the author of the older Bharata. Badarikasrama is a famous shrine where Hindus in large numbers flock to worship Narayana in spite of its great inaccessibility and travelling difficulties sometimes resulting in death. Vyasa is immortal. The name of Parasurama, though said to be immortal, is found in the list of 24 kings who passed away as mortals just before quoted from the table of contents. There can be no two Vyasas or a Vyasa who was really living as immortal even for a very long time like Markendaya sage. Vyasa, it is said, established Narayana in the Himalayas and taught his disciples Shanti Parva.

"Living on the side of that foremost of mountains, Mahadeva of great vows scorched the gods greatly. At the foot of those mountains, in a retired spot, Parsahara's son of great ascetic merit, *viz.*, Vyasa, taught the Vedas to his disciples. Those disciples were the highly blessed Sumanta, Vaishampayana, Jaimini of great wisdom, and Paila of great ascetic merit. Suka went to that charming asylum where his father, the great ascetic Vyasa, was living surrounded by his disciples."†

Badrika was the Ashrama of Vyasa. It is said in the Mahabharata that he lived in the Himalayas. The Mahabharata first grew out of a smaller work of 8800 verses and then of 24000 verses, as is distinctly told in the survey of contents. It is significant that there is a variation in the 1st and 2nd Chapters, so far as the survey and synopsis of contents are concerned, in the current Mahabharata. The origin of the name of the Mahabharata is not uniform but is given differently in different places. At the end of the table of contents it is said that the four Vedas were found light in substance and gravity of importance in the scale of weight. In Chapters LXII and CCIX the name is derived from the great deeds of the Bharata Royal family of kings in India. Everywhere Vyasa is spoken of as its author and that it took him three years to write. The line of discipleship is clearly

*Prof. C. V. Vaidya's "History of Sanskrit Literature", pages 52-53. (Souti period.)

† The Mahabharata, Chapter CCCXXVIII, Shanti Parva, verses 24—27.

given in the Shanti Parva, Chapters CCCXXVIII and CCCXXX, which is as follows:—

Sanatkumar.
|
Narada.
|
Vyasa.

His disciples (Sumanta, Vaishampayana, Jaimini and Paila.) — **His son, Suka,**

It is clearly stated that the great discourse having Narayana for its theme was repeated to the sages assembled at the sacrifice of Saunaka at Naimisaranya, which Vyasa had previously heard from Narada (in Chapter CCCXLVI, Shanti Parva, verses 13—15), who recited it to the Pandavas. It is repeated in Chapter CCCXLIX, verses 11 and 12, and again in the same chapter, verses 64 and 65, etc., 81 to 88, that it was Vyasa who initiated Yudhisthira in the religion of Narayana, which was the aim and object of the original Bharata Samhita to which the Mahabharata owes its origin. This was the Narayana section of the Mahabharata.

Every chapter has a colophon distinguishing it from others. The Pandavas and Kurus were never the heroes of the Bharata Samhita, which Vyasa had first composed under instructions from Narada. Suka was enlightened by his father Vyasa and Narada, which might have been included in the Bharata Samhita as well as the discourse between Asita Devala and Jaigishavya in the same Parva, Chapter CCXXIX as the sages Suka and Devala are mentioned as the reciters of the book in Chapter I, verse 106. The revisers of the Mahabharata seem to be Vaishampayana, his great nephew, Yajnavalkya, and Sounaka, as is clearly mentioned in the Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CLII, verses 12 and 13. The name of Sattwata referred to in the verse owes its origin to the Narayana episode in Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXLIX.

"Addressing Brahman, the Supreme Narayana said,—'Do you, O son, create all kinds of creatures from your mouth and feet. O you of excellent vows, I shall do what will be good for you for I shall impart to you both energy and strength sufficient to make you competent for this work. Do you receive also from me this excellent religion known by the name of Sattwata. Helped by that religion do you create the golden age and ordain it duly. Thus addressed, Brahman bowed his head to the illustrious Harimedhas and received from him that foremost of all religions with all its mysteries and abstract of details, together with the Aranyakas,—the religion which originated from the mouth of Narayana.'"*

As regards Yajnavalkya, it is found in Chapter CCCXIX of Shanti Parva:—

"I obtained the Yajushes, O king, from the sun-god. With the hardest penances I formerly adored the heat giving god. O sinless one, pleased with me, the powerful

*The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXLIX, verses, 28, 29 and 30, page 577.

sun, addressed me, saying,—'O regenerate Rishi, pray for the boon you covet, however difficult it may be of acquisition. I shall, with cheerful mind, grant it to you. It is very difficult to make me grant grace.'' Bowing to him with my head, I addressed that foremost of heat-giving luminaries thus,—'I have to acknowledge, of the Yajushes. I wish to know them forthwith.' The holy one, thus solicited told me,—'I shall grant you the Yajushes. Made up of the essence of speech, the goddess of learning Saraswati will enter into your person.' The God then ordered me to open my mouth. I did as I was commanded. The goddess Saraswati then entered into my body, O sinless one. At this, I began to burn. Unable to suffer the pain I plunged into a river. Not understanding what the great sun had done for me for my well-being, I became even angry with him. While I was burning with the energy of the goddess, the holy sun told me.—'Do you suffer this burning sensation for only a little time. That will soon come to an end and you will be cool.' Indeed, I became cool. Beholding me restored to ease, the maker of light said to me,—'The whole Vedas, with its appendix, together with the Upanishads, will appear in you by inward light, O twice-born one. You will also edit the entire Satapathas, O foremost of twice-born ones. After that, your understanding will turn to the path of Liberation. You will also acquire that end which is desirable and which is coveted by both Sankhyas and Yogins.' Having said so, the divine sun proceeded to the setting hills. Hearing his last words, and after he had departed from where I was, I came home in joy and then remembered the goddess Saraswati. Thought of by me, the auspicious Saraswati appeared immediately before my eyes, adorned with all the vowels and the consonants and having placed the syllable OM in the van. I then, according to the ordinance, offered to the goddess the usual Arghya, and dedicated another to the sun, that foremost of all heat-giving gods. Doing this duty I took my seat, devoted to both those gods. Thereupon the entire Satapatha Brahmanas, with all their mysteries and with all their abstracts as also their appendices, appeared of themselves before my mind's eye, at which I became filled with great joy. I then taught them to a hundred competent disciples and thereby did what was disagreeable to my great maternal uncle (Vaishampayana) with the disciples round him. Then, shining in the midst of my disciples like the sun himself with his rays, I took the management of the sacrifice, of your noble father, O king. In that sacrifice, a quarrel arose between me and my maternal uncle as to who should be allowed to take the sacrificial fee that was paid for the recitation of the Vedas. In the very presence of Devala, I took half of that fee. Your father and Sumanta and Paila and Jaimini and other ascetics all agreed to that arrangement. I had thus got from the sun the five times ten Yajushes, O king. I then studied the Puranas with Romaharshan. Keeping before me those Mantras and the goddess Saraswati, I then, O king, helped by the inspiration of the sun, set myself to compile the excellent Satapatha Brahmanas, and succeeded in performing the task never before undertaken by anyone else. That path which I had wished to take, has been taken by me and I have also taught it to my disciples. Indeed I gave to my disciples the whole of those Vedas with their abstracts. Pure in mind and body, all those disciples have, on account of my instructions, become filled with joy Having established this knowledge consisting of fifty branches which I had acquired from the sun, I now meditate on the great object of that knowledge (*viz.*, Brahma). The Gandharva Vishwavasu, a master of the Vedanta Shastra, desirous, O king, of ascertaining what is good for the Brahmanas in this knowledge and what truth is in it, and what is the excellent object of this knowledge, once catechised me.''*

It is interesting that Vyasa, Dhaumya, Yajnavalkya and Paila officiated in Yudhisthira's sacrifices of Kaj-suya and Asvamedha, *vide*

* The Mahabharata, Chapter CCCXIX, Shanti Parva, verses 2—28, pages 494—5.

Sava Parva, Chapter XXXIII, verses 35-36 and Aswamedha Parva, Chapter LXXII, verse 3. In the next chapter it is said that a disciple of Yajnavalkya proceeded with Arjuna to perform Vedic auspicious rites to protect him. It is evident Yajnavalkya was also a student of Vyasa efficient in sacrificial rites, and used to perform these rites on behalf of the Pandavas, but his uncle Vaishampayana is nowhere mentioned in this connection. In the Asvamedha ceremony the name of Dhaumya was not found. As regards Saunaka, Professor Max Muller's 'Ancient Sanskrit Literature' gives a very interesting account regarding the edition of the Mahabharata with Harivamsa:

"Shadgurusishya in his commentary on Katyayana's Sarvanukrama, says:—'Sunahotra, the great Muni, was born of Bharadvaja, and of him was born Sunahotra, all the world being a witness. Indra himself went to the sacrifice of the Rishi in order to please him. The great Asuras, thinking that Indra was alone, and wishing to take him, surrounded the sacrificial enclosure. Indra, however, perceived it, and taking the guise of the Rishi, he went away. The Asuras seeing the sacrificer again, seized Sunahotra, taking him for Indra. He saw the god that is to be worshipped, and saying, 'I am not Indra, there he is, ye fools, not I', he was released by the Asuras. Indra called and spake to him: 'Because thou delightest in praising, therefore thou art called Gritsamada, O Rishi: thy hymn will be called by the name of Indrasya Indriyam, the might of Indra. And thou, being born in the race of Bhrigu, shalt be Saunaka, the descendant of Sunaka, and thou shalt see again the second Mandala, together with that hymn." He, the Muni Gritsamada, was born again, as commanded by Indra. It was he who saw the great second Mandala of the Rig Veda as it was revealed to him together with the hymn Sajaniya: it was he, the great Rishi, to whom at the twelve years' sacrifice, Ugrasravas, the son of Ramaharsana, the pupil of Vyasa, recited, in the midst of the sacrifice, the story of the Mahabharata, together with the tale of the Harivansa, a story to be learnt from Vyasa alone, full of every kind of excellence, dear to Hari, sweet to hear, endowed with great blessing. It was he who was the lord of the sages, dwelling in the Naimishya Forest; he, who to the King Satanika, the son of Janmejoya, brought the laws of Vishnu, which declare the powers of Hari. That Saunaka, celebrated among the Rishis as the glorious, having seen the second Mandala, and heard the collection of the Mahabharata, being also the propagator of the laws of Vishnu, the great boat on the ocean of existence, was looked upon by the great Rishis as the only vessel, in which worshippers might get over the Bahvricha, with its twenty-one Sakhas, like one who had crossed the Rig Veda."*

These revisers and editors of the Mahabharata did not clearly give their names, but preserved intact the name of the author with great respect. They are for the first time traced out with great labour as far as possible and practicable. There are others who embellished it with enormity. It is almost impossible to unravel their names; but this much can be said with certainty, that the Sutas, Ugrasrava and his son Romaharsana, introduced a hero of their race in Karna as the principle actor if not all in all in their edition of the Mahabharata. Karna, Bhisma and others were fictitious characters to make the work dramatic and sensational. It is impossible that the Royal Kshatriya

* Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pages 230—233.

family of Ancient India, who took strong exception to Krishna's place of honour in Yudhisthira's Raja-suya, would accord a Suta hero a place of honour and kingdom. It was for this that a cock and bull story was invented that Karna was a son of Kunti in her maidnehood, that Krishna tried to bribe him and failed and, what is more that Yudhisthira, when he came to know about it, mourned and cursed women that they were not able to keep anything secret. This is quite contrary to the survey of contents of the Mahabharata, where the constancy of Kunti was praised and was one of the principal themes of the Mahabharata and there was no mention of Rama. In the last edition of the Mahabharata, which is nothing but a drama, Karna was introduced as the mainstay of the Kurus in their fight with the Pandavas. It will be seen that colophons at the end of chapters give important clues to the discovery of facts. For instance the word Kathanubandha in Chapters 59 and 60, Adi Parva, means a prologue with which one edition of the Mahabharata of Vyasa begins and its table of contents is given in the next Chapter 61 with the colophon 'Bharata Sutra' or table of contents, which is very important.

There is no mention of Bhisma, Drona or Kripa and their great fight with the Pandavas. Karna's name is not mentioned as a warrior or hero, equal to Arjuna if not greater than him, as is represented in the current Mahabharata, but as one of the evil counsellors of Durjodhana, who tried to decimate the Pandavas. There is no mention of Draupadi's five husbands or Arjuna's other marriages than with Subhadra. There was no mention of Salya or Jayadratha or Vagadatta on the side of the Kurus as great warriors, nor was there anything said about Dristadyumna, Shikandi, Birata or Satyaki on the side of the Pandavas. There is no mention of the incidents of the Birata Parva, how the Pandavas disclosed themselves in the dramatic way in the fight described in that Parva like Svayambara. There is no mention of the peculiar births of Dhritarashtra, Pandu and Bidura or those of their children, although there is given the kind of persecutions to which the young Pandavas were subjected in the Kuru Court ending with the lac house as well as Bhima's marriage with Hidimba and killing the Baka demon at Ekchackra.

Yajnavalkya's edition begins with Astika Parva, whereas that of Saunaka naturally starts with the Poulama Parva account of the Bhrigu. The next edition of the Mahabharata came into being at the time of King Janmejoya. It is evident from Chapter 62, Adi Parva, with which the book begins. Another edition of king Satanika begins with Sambhaba Parva. Souti's edition is the current Mahabharata. The introduction of new matters begins with the significant word

"Hanta" in all beginnings, which must have been seen. In all the following beginnings it is found:—

Adi Parva	Chapter	53	Verse	4.
Do.	do.	59*	do.	9
Do.	do.	65	do.	9*
Do.	do.	86	do.	10
Do.	do.	94	do.	4.

The Sanskrit Lexicon bears out that it is so. It is not confined to one Adi Parva only, but is found elsewhere in several Parvas.

Drona Parva	Chapter	II.	Verse	1.
Do.	do.	84	do.	1.
Karna Parva	do.	45	do.	1.
Shanti ,,	do.	163	do.	6.
Do	do.	195	do.	1.
Do.	do.	340	do.	18.
Do.	do.	342	do.	2.

*The annotator Nilkantha says that the word is used in the beginning of an episode.

INTERPOLATIONS AND REVISIONS.

The Indian Epics are not histories in the true sense of the word so far as the material world is concerned, but they are of the spiritual and religious world.

The Mahabharata and the Ramayana in their first conception were meant to pay off the debts or obligations to deities, sages and parents by sacrifices both in the spiritual and material worlds by Devajajna and Pitrijajna.

It is evident that ancient kings and sages were mindful of the need to prolong the lives of humanity in every way. In the Ramayana the great hero Rama went to the forest as he was to be installed on the throne by royal declaration, only in order to relieve his father from the debt of a boon he had promised to his wife Kaikeyi, who is' represented as Jara, according to the Hindu institute. Similarly, Puru absolved his father from the curse of Devajani's father.

Indra, the Vedic God, plays an important part in the Epics of India. The son of Ravana, Meghnada, was the conqueror of Indra, and the king Uparichara Basuhoma was the introducer of the ceremony of Indradvaja and was latterly converted into a worshipper of Narayana, with whose account the Mahabharata begins. The Soubhari Samhita says that Indra worshipped Vishnu, and the gods assembled christened the place with the name of Indraprastha. Arjuna worshipped Siva and was initiated in the use of arms and got the special weapon called Pasupat, which made him the greatest hero of the age. Karna and Arjuna were said to have been the sons of the Sun and Indra, respectively. Yajnavalkya was the nephew of Vaishampayana and worshipped the Sun. The Pandavas were credited with the founding of Indraprastha and worshipped the Vedic gods. Maya Danaba, who was released, did the Pandavas great service by building their city of palaces at Indraprastha. In the Ramayana, Maya is said to be the father-in-law of Ravana and he seems to have been the author of the moral lesson, as there is a reference to this in the Mahabharata.

Risabh, the son of Nabhi, married the daughter of Indra Jayanti, whose elder son was Bharata, to whom the name Bharatbarsha owed its origin.

Risabh might be called the founder of the Jain religion and his discourse in the Shanti Parva, Chapter CXXVII, refers to Narayana and the

story of king Viradyumna, stricken with grief for the loss of his son Bhuridyumna. The distressed king saw his son and realised that there was nothing so distressing as disappointment. He alone who could conquer hope could be happy. He renounced worldly enjoyments and became an ascetic or religious devotee. The table of contents states that a king in similar circumstances heard the accounts of kings from Narada (Adi Parva, Chapter I, verses 225—230), and Shanti Parva practically begins with that account in the version of Krishna in Chapter XXIX.

Narada's description to Sanjoya reveals one important truth which was misrepresented in regard to sacred Ganga. The account of Bhagiratha was foisted upon king Pratipa, father of Santanu. The quotations will speak for themselves.

"Ganga, named Bhagrathi, sat upon the lap of this king living near ther stream, and therefore, passed by the name of Urvashi. The Ganga, who had three courses, had agreed to be the daughter of Bhagiratha of Ikshaku's race, who always celebrated sacrifices with enough presents to the Brahmanas.*

"There was a king, named Pratipa, engaged in doing good to all creatures. He spent many years in ascetic penances, going to the source of (the river) Ganga. The accomplished and beautiful Ganga, in the form of a tempting woman, rose from the water and came to the king. That beautiful-featured lady, that intelligent celestial maiden, endued with ravishing beauty, sat upon the right thigh of the king, which was like a Sal tree. Thereupon, the king Pratipa asked that famous one, 'O fortunate lady, what good can I do to you and which you desire?' The maiden said:—'O King, I desire to have you. I offer myself,—accept me. To reject a woman who is full of desire is never considered good by the wise.' Pratipa said:—'O beautiful lady, I never go to another man's wife out of lust. O fortunate maiden this is my solemn vow.'"†

Nor is this all. Yajati did not deprive his sons of their legitimate shares and was more virtuous, wise, wealthy and forbearing than Srinjoya. His realm reached the very shores of the sea. Puru was only given the throne on which he sat (Chapter XXIX, Shanti Parva, verses 94—99).

Prithu first received the title of king, the name Kshatriya originated from him, meaning the protector of people, and the subjects were devoted to him as the great advancer of all things, as the very name Prithu implied. He was installed at the forest of Dandakaranya by the sages. The king Danda was cursed by Bhrigu for ravishing his daughter Arayya (Ramayana VII, Uttarakanda, Cantos 93-94). This was referred to in the Mahabharata by the famous chaste lady in Bana Parva, Chapter CCV, verses 25—28.

"O Brahmana, O sinless one, you should forgive this fault of mine. I know the energy of the Brahmanas, as also the superior position of those who are possessed

* The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter XXIX, page 38, verses 68-69.

† Page 142, Adi Parva, Chapter XCVII, verses 1—6.

of great intelligence. By their wrath the ocean was made brackish and undrinkable. (I know also the energy of) the sages, blazing with asceticism; and who are possessed of restrained souls. The fire of their wrath has not been appeased as yet in the wood Dandaka. Owing to his disregard of the Brahmanas, the evil-minded Vatapi, the crooked, but great Asura, having advanced to the sage Agasthya was digested by him. Thus the superior energy of the high souled Brahmanas has been heard."

This story seemed to have appeared in different garb in the Shanti Parva as a Tuladhara and Jajali discourse. The word Dharma Byadha is significant as the reader of lectures to Kousika in Bana Parva. The lessons are very important, coming as they do from the mouth of Markendeya, a descendant of the Bhrigu family. Bhrigu was the author of the codes of morality. It is mentioned in the Mahabharata and there is a big discourse between Bhrigu and Bharadvaja in Shanti Parva. In Chapters XXIII and LVII Brihaspati and Sukra recited the self-same moral lesson to a king in verses 14 and 3, respectively.

"The earth devours a king, averse to fight, and a Brahman, fond of his wife and children."

It is evident that they were guided by one book of Narayana, the Bharata Samhita. Chapter LVII, verses 5—14, describes the strong rules of conduct which used to guide the kings and sages in Ancient India.

"He, who acts inimically towards your kingdom consisting of seven limbs, should be killed, may he be your preceptor or friend. There is an ancient Sloka recited by king Marutta, quite of a piece with Brihaspati's view, O king, about the duty of kings. According to the scriptual injunction, there is punishment for even the preceptor if he becomes haughty and disregardful of his duty, and if he transgresses all restrictions. Vahu's son, the highly intelligent king Sagara from desire of doing good to the citizens, banished his own eldest son Asamanjas. Asamanjas, O king, used to drown the children of the citizens in the Sarayu. His father, therefore, remonstrated with and exiled him. The Rishi Uddalaka renounced his favourite son Swetaketu, of rigid penances, because the latter used to invite Brahmanas with false promises of entertainment. To make their subjects happy, to observe truth and to act sincerely are the eternal duties of kings. The king should not hanker after the wealth of others. He should in time give what should be given. If the king becomes endued with prowess, truthful in speech and forgiving in temper, he would never be shorn of prosperity. With soul purged of sins the king should be able to govern his anger and all his conclusions should be according to the scripture. He should also always follow morality, worldly profit, pleasure and emancipation. The king should always keep his counsels close regarding these three. No greater misfortune can betake the king than the giving out of his counsels".

"The following verse was recited in days of Yore by Ushanas of Bhrigu's race, in the narrative called Ramacharita, on the subject, O Bharata, of royal duties. One should first select a king. Then should he select a wife, and then acquire wealth. If there be no king, what would become of his wife and properties? About those who seek kingdom, there is no other eternal duty than the protection (of subjects). The protection the king grants to his subjects maintains the world. Manu, the son of Prachetas, recited these two verses regarding the the duties of kings. Listen to them with attention. These six persons should be shunned like a leaky boat on

the sea, *viz.*, a preceptor who does not speak, a priest who has not studied the Scriptures, a king who does not give protection, a wife who utters disagreeable words, a cow-herd who likes to rove within the village and a barber who wishes to go to the forest." *

This is the aim of the ancient Rama-Charita or the Ramayana; but the current Ramayana does not fulfill it. It will be seen that what the famous Gautama Buddha preached was nothing new, for it is found in the Mahabharata :—

"The Fowler said: —O foremost of the regenerate ones, sacrifice, gift, austerity, the study of the Vedas, and truthfulness, these five holy things are always noticed in a virtuous conduct Having control over desires, anger, haughtiness, avarice, and wickedness, those who take pleasure in virtue because it is virtue, are, in the opinion of the honest and wise, really reckoned to be virtuous. Those persons who perform sacrifices and are ever devoted to the study of Vedas, have no behaviours other than what are practised by the virtuous. Indeed good behaviour forms the second attribute of the pious. O Brahmana, rendering services to the superiors, truthfulness, wrathlessness and gift, —these four are ever present in those, who are really virtuous. One can wholly obtain credit by directing the heart towards virtuous behaviour. This he gains only by practising the above four; otherwise to gain this becomes impossible. Truth constitutes the essence of the Vedas. Control over passions constitutes the essence of truth, and self-denial (refraining from the worldly enjoyments) forms the essence of self-control. These attributes are always present in virtuous conduct. †

"The explanation of virtue is three-fold. The first is called the supreme virtue, which is inculcated in the Vedas. The second is what is laid down in Dharmashastras. The third is called the honest behaviour, which is observed by the pious. Crossing over (the ocean of knowledge, the performance of ablutions in the places of pilgrimage. Forgiveness, truthfulness, simplicity, sacredness are the characteristics of virtuous conduct. Those who are kind to all creatures, and who are never malignant, and who never speak ill of anybody, and who are always dear to the twice-born ones, and who are familiar with the results of good or evil actions, are reckoned by the wise to be virtuous. Again, those who are just and virtuous, and well disposed towards all. And who are honest, and have obtained Heaven, who possess sacred characters, and constantly tread in the path of virtue, who are liberal in gifts, and unselfish, who show favour to the distressed. And who are revered by all, who possess the wealth of knowledge, who are devotees, and who are kind to all creatures, are virtuous according to the honest and wise. The persons who are charitable secure prosperity in this world, and abodes of happiness in the next. The virtuous man, if approached and solicited by the honest and wise, gives away alms to them with the best of his power, even at the denial of the comforts of his wife and dependents. Looking to their own interest, and having an eye upon virtue and the ways of the world. The men, who thus practise virtue obtain the greatest amount of virtue through eternal ages. Persons who possess the attributes of truthfulness, abstention from injuring others, modesty, and simplicity. And who are not malicious and proud, who are mild and self-sacrificing, who have self-control, and forbearance, intelligence and patience, (who are kind towards all creatures. And who are free from desires and malice, are said to be the witnesses

* The Mahabharata, Chapter LVII, page 80, Shanti Parva, verses 5—14 and 30—44.
† The Mahabharata, Vana Parva, Chapter CCVI, verses 62—67 pages 312—14.

of the world. These three are reckoned to constitute the highest way of the pious, *viz.*, a man must not offend anybody. He must be charitable. Also he must speak the truth always. Those great men of highest virtue, who are kind on all occasions, and who are filled with compassion, obtain the greatest contentment and ascend the superior path of virtue; and whose acquistion of virtue is most certain. Harmlessness, forgiveness, peacefulness, contentment, agreeable speech, giving away passions and excitements, the service of the virtuous characters. Actions performed in accordance with the dictates of the Sastras constitute the superior path of the honest and the wise. Those who constantly follow the path of virtue and daily worship the virtuous, can ascend the palace of knowledge. It is they only who are freed from that greatest terror (re-birth). O best of Brahmanas, it is they only who have the power of observing the several aspects of human nature."*

"Markendeya said:— O Brahmana, I am always assiduous in eradicating this evil. The Destiny has already killed one (when he is killed by another),—the executioner is but an instrument. O foremost of Brahmanas, we are but such agents in consequence of our Karma. O twice-born one, those animals that are killed, and the most of which are sold, also acquire Karma, for the celestials, the guests and servants are entertained and Pitris are gratified with this dainty food. It is mentioned in the Sruti that herbs, vegetables, deer, birds and the wild animals are the ordained food for all creatures. O foremost of Brahmanas, the son of Ushinara, Sibi of great forbearance, obtained Heaven, which is very difficult to obtain, by giving away his own flesh. O Brahmana, in the days of Yore two thousand animals used to be killed every day in the kitchen of the king Rantideva. And in the same manner two thousand kine were killed every day. Rantideva daily distributed food mixed with meat. O foremost of Brahmanas, that king thus acquired unrivalled fame. For the four monthly festival, animals must daily be killed. It is heard in Sruti that Agni is fond of animal food. O Brahmana, in sacrifices animals are always killed by the Brahmanas. O Brahmana, they thus, sanctified by Mantras, go to Heaven. If Agni were not so fond of animal food in the days of yore, then it could never have become the food of anyone else. O foremost of Brahmanas, the following rule about meat-eating has been laid down by the Rishis. 'Whoever eats animal food after duly offering it to the celestials and the Pitris does not commit any sin by eating it.' It has been heard in the Sruti that such a man is considered to have taken no animal food, as a Brahmachari, if he holds intercourse with his wife in her season, is still considered to be a (good) Brahmana.

"There are various ways in which evil Karma might be expiated,—such as, by making gifts, by speaking truth and by serving the preceptor. By worshipping the order of the twice-born, by becoming devoted to virtue, free from pride and idle talk. O foremost of Brahmanas, I do these things. Agriculture is considered to be a praiseworthy occupation, but it is well-known that even in it great harm is done to animal life. In ploughing the ground, various creatures and animal lives are destroyed. O foremost of Brahmanas, do you not think so? Vrihi and other so called seeds of rice are all living organisms,—what is your opinion on this matter? Men hunt wild animals and kill them to eat their meat; they also cut up trees and plants. O Brahmana, there are innumerable animal organisms in trees and fruits. And also in water,—do you not think so? O Brahmana, the whole universe is full of animals and animal organisms. Do you not see that fish preys upon fish and various other species of animals prey on various other animals, and there are also some who prey upon one another. O Brahmana,

* The Mahabharata, Vana Parva, Chapter CCVI, pages 312—314, verses 83—98.

a man kills innumerable animals that live in the ground by trampling them under his feet. Even wise and learned men kill many animals in various ways when sleeping or resting. What have you to say to this? The earth and the sky are all full of animal organisms, which are unconsciously killed by men from ignorance,—what have you to say to this? 'Do not kill', this commandment as ordained in the days of Yore was laid down by men who did not know the real facts. O foremost of men, who is there on earth who does not do harm to any creature? After full consideration,—this is the conclusion (that I have come to)—that there is none who has not killed an animal. O foremost of Brahmanas, even the Rishis whose vows are not to destroy animals, (do destroy animals). Only on account of their very great care, they commit less destruction (of animals). Men of noble birth and great accomplishment perpetrate wicked acts in defiance of all, and they are not ashamed of it. Good men acting in an examplary way are not praised by other good men, nor bad men acting in a contrary way are praised by other wicked men. Friends are not agreeable to friends, however accomplished they might be. Foolish pedantic men (ever) find fault with the virtue of their preceptors. Such reverses of the natural orders of things, O foremost of Brahmanas, are always seen (in this world). What is your opinion as to the virtuousness or otherwise of this state of things?" *

"The Fowler said:—It is ordained by the old as found in the Sruti that the ways of virtue are subtle, diverse and infinite. In life being at risk and in marriage, it is proper to speak an untruth. Sometimes by untruth, truth is maintained and by truth untruth is maintained. Whatever conduces to the greatest good of all creatures is considered to be the truth. Virtue is thus perverted. Do you mark its subtle ways?..... Whoever with hearts full of gratitude and free from malice try to do what is good, obtain wealth, virtue, happiness and Heaven. Those who are freed from sin, those who are wise, forbearing, righteous and self-controlled enjoy continuous bliss in this world and in the next world.† ...Self-discipline can only be acquired by subduing the senses. It cannot be acquired by any other means. Heaven and hell both are dependent on our senses. When subdued, they lead us to Heaven and when indulged in, they lead us to hell. This subjugation of the senses is the highest means of attaining spiritual advancement; it is also at the root of all our spiritual degradation. By indulging in them, a person contracts vices and by bringing them under control, he attains salvation. The self-controlled man who acquires power over his six senses is never tainted with sin; and consequently evil has no power over him. Man's body has been compared with a chariot, his soul with a charioteer, and his senses with the horses. A skilful man drives about without confusion, like an able charioteer with well-broken horses. That man is an excellent driver who knows how to patiently wield the reins of these wild horses,—namely the six senses inherent in our nature. When our senses become ungovernable like horses on the road, we must patiently rein them in, for with patience we are sure to get the better of them. When man's mind is overpowered by any one of these senses running wild, he loses his reason and becomes like a ship tossed by the tempest in the sea. Men are deceived by illusion in hoping to reap the fruit of those six things the effects of which are studied by persons of spiritual insight who thereby reap the fruits of their clear perception.'‡

"He who is greatly under the influence of spiritual ignorance, who is foolish, senseless and given to (day) dreaming, who is idle, unenergetic, full of anger and

*The Mahabharata, Chapter CCVII, Vana Parva, verses 3—15 and 21—38, pages 314-315

†The Mahabharata, Chapter CCVIII, Vana Parva, verses 2—4 and 42-43, pp. 315 and 316.

‡The Mahabharata, Chapter CCX, Vana Parva, verses 18—27, page 319.

haughtiness, is said to be under the influence of Tama. O Brahmana Rishi, that excellent man who is agreeable in speech, thoughtful. free from envy, industrious in action from an eager desire to reap its fruits and of warm temperament, is said to be under the influence of Raja. He who is resolute, patient, not subject to anger, free from malice and is not skilful in action from want of a selfish desire to reap its fruits and who is wise and forbearing, is said to be under the influence of Satya. When a man endued with Satya quality is influenced by worldliness he suffers misery, but he hates worldliness when he realises its full significance. Then a feeling of indifference to worldly affairs begins to influence him. And then his pride decreases and uprightness becomes more prominent. His conflicting moral sentiments are reconciled and then self-restraint in any matter (for him) becomes unnecessary. O Brahmana, a man may be born as a Sudra but if he is endued with good qualities, he may attain to the state of a Vaisya. Similarly that of a Kshatriya; and if he is steadfast in rectitude he may even become a Brahmana." *

The evolution of the ancient Hindu caste system is fully demonstrated in the foregoing quotation as against the theory of heredity in the Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda. which is reflected in the story of Prithu being raised from the right thigh of king Vena, slain by the Brahmana through the instrumentality of Kusa or sacrifice (Chapter LIX, Shanti Parva, verses 94-95).

The duty of a child to its parents is described. The parents were then held to be ideal living gods and goddesses to the children and it was their first duty to serve them whole-heartedly with the family. Such a thing is still found in orthodox Hindu families where Western ideas have not entered.

"The Fowler said:—O exalted one, these my father and mother are the idols I worship with whatever adoration due to the gods. Thirty-three million gods with Indra at their head, are worshipped by all men, so are these aged parents of mine worshipped by me. As the Brahmanas try to procure offerings for their gods, so do I, with diligence for these two (my aged parents). O Brahmana, these my father and mother are my supreme gods. O twice-born one, I always try to gratify them with the offering of fruits, flowers and gems. To me they are like the three sacred fires mentioned by the learned. O Brahmana, they are to me as the sacrifices in the four Vedas. My five vital airs, my wife, children, and friends are all for them. With my wife and my children, I always serve them. O foremost of Brahmanas, with my own hands I assist them in bathing; I also wash their feet, I give them food. I speak to them only what is agreeable, avoiding all, that is unpleasant and disagreeable. I even do that which is not virtuous, to please them. O foremost of the twice-borns, O Brahmana, I am always diligent in always waiting upon them. The parents, the sacred fire, the soul, the preceptor,—these five, O foremost of Brahmanas deserve the highest worship from a person who seeks prosperity. By properly serving them, one acquires the merit of perpetually keeping up the sacred fires. It is the eternal and invariable duty of all who lead domestic life."†

* The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXI, Vana Parva, verses 5—12, pages 319-320.

† The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXIII, Vana, Parva, page 322, verses 18—28.

The story of a chaste lady's challenge to the Brahman saying, when the latter had pronounced his curse upon her, that it was not like the case of his curse destroying a crow or a crane, is a very well-known tradition passed into a proverb very commonly used in every day conversation all over Bengal. Bengal is famous as the stronghold of the Jains. The hill Parsanath is their famous shrine. The Bhagabata speaks in high terms about the Rajarshi Risava who retired to the Himalayas, and one of the Usin peaks is called Risava and the word, when it is affixed after a word, is used as a superlative degree of it, such as Debarshava, Purusharshava, etc. Risava's father Nobhi and mother Maru Debi retired into the forest of Badarika when Risava was installed on the throne in Brahmabarta. The Mahabharata says that he met the great Nara and Narayana at Badrikasrama. This gives important data regarding the Nara Narayana edition of the Mahabharata, where the founder of the Jain religion is mentioned. The Nara Narayana edition seems to be the last edition of the Mahabharata, for in it the idea of transmigration and renunciation came into prominence with the Yoga system of philosophy. Yajnavalkya initiated it.

There are eighteen Puranas of the Hindus and the Parvas or sections of the Mahabharata are the same in number. One can hardly overlook certain significant facts. These Puranas are not as old as the Epics, yet not one of them is as large as the Mahabharata. Many things said in the great Epic were described in the Puranas. The Bhagabata Purana occupies pride of place among the eighteen Puranas. As a piece of literature its place is also the highest among the sacred Hindu books. It not only bears the stamp of a unified composition but its style, metre, dictum and language are very learned and difficult. It is of a later age than Vyasa's time and some hold it to be the production of the well-known grammarian Bopadeba. It seems probable that he recast, in a masterly way, what Vyasa composed. No Purana shows such close relationship to the Indian Epics, especially the Mahabharata, as the Bhagabata. Indeed, it is mentioned in the preamble of the latter and seems to be very true. Kapila is mentioned as the incarnation of Narayana in the Epics. This also is mentioned in the Bhagabata, Book III, at the end. The Sakuntala episode and the love metaphysics of Krishna are the life and soul of the Bhagabata. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana tried to depict this in the numerous characters of Sita, Damayanti, Ahalya, Tara, Draupadi—but all these were thrown into the background by the marvellous description of Rashlila. Krishna was not present there in person but in the part of the love-lost girls of Brindaban. In the Mahabharata this was tried at the dice play, where even a wise and learned husband and king like Yudhis-

thira could think of staking his consort, marriage with whom won him prosperity—paternal properties were recovered, villians' crimes were publicly exposed and monarchy over kings was established in the Rajsuya.

There is the difference between earthly and Heavenly love in the Mahabharata, but the cow-herd girls were lost in the pure love excited in youth by the company of an innocent playmate who rose to eminence as a hero and god and left them to reign in Dwarka with sixteen thousand queens. This number is a favourite one with the ancient sages who were authors of the sacred books, for that was the number of the sons of king Sagar who were destroyed by the curse of Kapila and released by the water of the divine Ganges. What the Old Testament is to the New Testament of the Christians, the Bharata and the Mahabharata are to the Hindus. The current Mahabharata contains incongruous matter due to the fall of Hinduism when Buddhism flourished, for Buddhist monarchs ruled India so as to propagate that religion all over the world. Buddhists believed in the Yoga system of philosophy and their aim and ambition led to Nirvana. The Puranas admit Buddha was one of the ten incarnations of God. This is an instance of ancient Hindu religious toleration. Of all the Puranas, Vishnu, contrary to tradition, ascribes its authorship to Parasara. A collection of all the passages common to the Mahabharata* and the Vishnu Purana is given by A. Holtzman, Mahabharata IV, 36 ff. The learned Hopkins says:—

"First, the Epic, synthetically considered, post dates the latest Vedic works. Second, the final redactors were priests, well acquainted with Vedic literature. Of these points there can be no doubt; nor is a third open to serious objection, namely, that the restriction of philosophical citation to philosophical chapters does not prove anything in regard to the date of the Epic that preceded the insertion of these chapters. Whether the Puranas, ascribed to Romaharsa (sic) in xii, 319, 21, precede or follow Epic literature, is not a question that can be answered categorically. Nothing is commoner than the statement made by some Epic character that a story was heard by him long ago in a Purana. But most of the extant Puranas are in their present shape certainly later than the Epic. Nevertheless, before the great Epic was completed the eighteen Puranas were known, since they are mentioned as a group xviii, 5, 46, (not in C) and 6, 97. Further, a Vayu Purana is referred to in iii, 191, 16:

etat te sarvam Akhyatam atitanagatam tatha
Vayuproktam anusmrtya Puranam rsisamstutam.

"This statement, however, implying that the Purana treats of future events, though illustrated in this instance by the Epic's account of later ages, scarcely tallies with the early Epic use of the word, which regularly connotes atita, the past, but not anagata, (account of) things to be; yet it corresponds exactly to the ordinary contents of the later Puranas."*

"As the Chandogya Upanishad applies the title 'Fifth Veda' to the Itihasa Purana, so the Epic claims the same title: it is true that it is also called a Dharma-

* Professor Hopkins' "The Great Epic of India", page 47.

castra, yet this represents but one side of its encyclopædic nature, as it is besides Arthacastra, Dharmacastra, and Kamacastra, i, 2, 383. When the character of the work as a whole is described, it is in terms of Epic story, not of didactic code. Even the Harivansa poet does not fail to distinguish the two elements. He boasts that the Epic is an akhyanam bahvartham crutivistram. but still says that it is the Bharati Katha, Bharata story, the root of which is the dramatic episode of the Rajasuya, which led to the development of the story (H. 3, 2, 13 ff.). So another poet proclaims :—'I will relate the great good fortune of that great hearted king the Bharata, whose brilliant Itihasa, story, is called the Mahabharata', i, 99, 49. The reason that Krishna Dvaipayana spent three years in making the Epic was not only that he wished to do a good thing but that he wished to 'extend the glory of the Pandus and other warriors. (i. 62, 17-28)'. Constituting a small but important part of the various tales told in the Epic are found genealogical verses, anuvanca-slokas (or gathas), which commemorate the history of the race of valiant kings and great seers of the past."*

Vishnu Purana is a dialogue between Parasara and Maitreya, both of whom figure in the Mahabharata as important personages connected with its plot and history. Parasara replies in the terms of what he had heard from his grandfather before, and the philosophical views are seen to be according to the Samkhya system. It is a grandfather's tale as it were, and Bhisma's discourse in the Mahabharata is surely of that nature. In the opening stanzas (Book I, 16. 49, 55, 61, 72) of the Mahabharata it is said to be a Samhita, collection of Purana, Itihasa, Kabya, Castra, narrations and Upanishads. The Harivansa and the Ramayana speak of theatrical exhibitions. Narada is the representative of Bharata as the genius of music and is well-known as a singer of praise to God to the accompaniment of stringed instruments.

"When the lyre is mentioned, it is to wake up sleepers by means of 'sweet songs and the sound of the lyre', gita, vinacabda, I. 218, 14. Only Narada, a superhuman archetypical bard, comes skilled in dance and song with his melodious mind-soothing tortoise-lyre, IX, 54, 19. There is then in the Epic, though a musical accompaniment is unknown, a distinct recollection of the practice of reciting lays, gitani, the sole object of which was to 'praise the Kuru race,' as opposed to reading or reciting conversationally stories of ancient times. To neither of these elements can a judicious historian ascribe priority. The story and the lay are equally old. Their union was rendered possible as soon as the lay, formerly sung, was dissociated from music and repeated as a heroic tale of antiquity. This union was the foundation of the present Epic."†

"But though it is a gross exaggeration of the facts, as well as a misapprehension of poetic values, to make the Epic a poem that was from the start a moral and religious narrative, yet, in as much as in the hands of the priest the latter element was made predominant, there is no objection to the statement that from the point of view of the Epic as a whole the Mahabharata is to-day less tale than teaching. That this double character was recognized by those who contributed the introduction to the poem itself is indisputable. The 'tales' are

* Professor Hopkins' "The Great Epic of India," page 53.

† Professor Hopkins' "The Great Epic of India," page 367.

counted as separate. The original Bharata was only a quarter of its present size. Then, as later, the different elements were still distinguished, and the poem was not regarded as wholly a Smriti or instruction-book, but as an artistic poem, Kavya, per se. So the pseudo-epic vaunts its own literary finish: cabde ca rthe ca hetau ca esa prathamasargaja (sarasvati), XII, 336, 36."*

In the Epic the repeaters of the genealogical verses are not different from the Sutas, but there is the group-phrase of Sutamaghadabandi nah. It is the Vaitalikas who recite genealogical verses, Sutas recite Purana, and Magadha, and Bandinash sing the glory of kings. The Mahabharata recited by Suta cannot but be a Purana; what Vaisampayana described is a narration; Narada, Samhita, Vyasa and Vaisampayana, Sastra Upanishad; Sanjoya, Kabya; Yajnavalkya, philosophy of Yoga; and the current Mahabharata, a drama, was the product of rhapsodists and story-tellers who tried to hold their audiences enthralled with new tales built up around the main story to create new interest every day—thoroughly heroic, religious, satirical and comical, as fitting entertainment for different men and the stranger alike.

In Bana's Kadambari, edited by Paterson,† it is stated that the heroine Kadambari is listening to a recitation of the Mahabharata from Narada's daughter in a single, gentle singing strain, and that a pair of kinsaras are playing the flute as an accompaniment. This is the play of the dramatic Epic. Naturally different creeds and cults found entrance with its vast scope, and sections were divided to suit different occasions. The people were called upon to bear the cost of recitation when the Hindu kingdom disappeared in the progress of time and they were not in a position to undertake the recitation of the whole Mahabharata. The result was different Puranas grew out of the Epics with Vyasa as their author. With the growing enlightenment and knowledge of the age the spurious Puranas were found out not to be the true account of the Epic; then the eighteen Puranas were replaced with the eighteen sections of the Mahabharata. It was then said that what could not be found in it would not be met with elsewhere. It was done at the time of the Hindu revival after the fall of the Buddhists in India. The Buddhists did not spare the heroes and heroines, investing them with all sorts of calumnies.

No language of India is so closely allied to Sanskrit as Bengali, and the Gaudiya recension of the Epics has been found to be the best. Bengal first published the Epics and their translations at tremendous cost. This to a great extent proves the cause of the interest in the origin of the books in Bengal. The discovery of the very old plaques in the ruins of Saptagrama, depicting scenes of the Epic Mahabharata,

* Professor Hopkins' "The Great Epic of India," page 368.
†Dr. Winternitz's "History of Indian Literature," page 463.

supports the claim of Bengal. The people of the North-Western Provinces and Bengal are famous worshippers of Rama and Krishna. The laws of Yajnavalkya are followed by the people of the North-Western Provinces, whereas in Bengal Jimutavahana's laws of inheritance are adopted. The learned Monier Williams' views about them will be interesting :—

"Jimutavahana, by some thought to have been a prince of the house of Silara who either composed this work himself or caused it to be compiled rather earlier than the beginning of the sixteenth century. It should be stated that both the Mitakshara and Daya-bhaga are developments of, rather than commentaries on, Manu and Yajnavalkya *......In the Maithila School or that of Mithila (North Behar and Tirhut), besides the Code of Yajanavalkya with the Mitakshara, the Vivada-chintamani and Vyavahara-chintamani of Vacaspati Misra are much studied; also the Vivada-ratnakara of Chandeshvara (who lived about 1314) and the Vivada-chandra, composed by a learned female named Lakhima-devi, who is said to have set the name of her kinsman, Misaru-misra, to her own works. In the Dravidian or South-Indian School, besides the Mitakshara, as before, there is the Smriti-chandrika and Dattaka-chandrika of Devanabhatta; Madhavacharya's commentary on Parasara's Code (called Parasara-smriti-vyakhya) ; and Nanda-pandita's commentary on Vishnu's Code (called Vaijayanti), and on Parasara's Code, and his treatise on the law of adoption called Dattaka-chandrika. In the Western School (of Bombay and Maha-rashtra), besides the Mitakshara, certain treatises by Nilakantha-bhatta, particularly one called Vyavahara-mayukha, have the most weight."†

There are as many as nineteen law-givers in Ancient India, but Manu stands pre-eminent amongst them, and second to him in importance may be said to be Yajnavalkya. The speaker in Manu Samhita is Manu himself as far as I, 60 verse, and thereafter Bhrigu. It is clearly said at the end that it was enunciated by Bhrigu. The great commentator of Manu is a Bengali Varendra Brahman Kullukabhatta, who lived in Benares. He explains Itihasa or history by the Mahabharata. Svayambhuba Manu learnt the laws from Brahma and taught them to Marichi and nine other sages. Bhrigu was deputed by him to declare his code to the world. The book is divided into twelve sections and not eighteen, like the Mahabharata. There are many verses common in Manu Samhita and the great Epic. It is a metrical version of ancient traditions (Smriti) like the great Epic. It is post-Vedic literature. The learned Monier Williams says:—

"An original collection is alluded to by commentators under the titles Vriddha and Vrihat, which is said to have contained 100,000 couplets; arranged under twenty-four heads in one thousand chapters; whereas the existing Code contains only 2,685 verses. Possibly abbreviated versions of old collections were made at successive periods, and additional matter inserted, the present text merely representing the latest compilation. At any rate we must guard against a supposition that the expression 'Code' often applied to this collection, is intended to denote a systematic arrangement of precepts which existed as actual laws in force

* Dr. Monier Williams' "Indian Wisdom," page 306.

† Dr. Monier Williams," "Indian Wisdom" pages 307-308.

throughout one country. It is probable that the whole of India was never under one Government. Some few powerful monarchs are known to have acquired sovereignty over very extensive territories, and were then called Chakra-vartins, but we must beware of imagining that Manu's Law-book is a record of national ordinances and institutions prevalent over the whole of such territories. No doubt ultimately it worked its way to acceptance with the entire Hindu community; and certainly in the end it not only secured for itself a high place in popular estimation and a degree of reverence only second to that accorded to the Veda, but it became moreover, the chief authority as a basis of Hindu Jurisprudence. Originally, however, its position must have been different. It merely represented certain rules and precepts (perhaps by different authors current among a particular tribe, or rather school of Brahmans called Manavas, who probably lived in the North-Western region between the river Sarasvati and Drishadvati (see p.210), not far from Delhi and the scene of the great social conflict described in the Mahabharata. This tribe seems to have belonged to the Taittiriyakas, 'adherents of the Black Yajur-Veda'; and their Mantras, Brahmana, and Srauta Sutras are still extant, but their Grihya and Samayacharika Sutras appear to have perished. In all probability, too, many of the rules, as we have them presented to us, were simply theoretical,—inserted to complete an ideal of what ought to constitute a perfect system of religious, ceremonial, moral, political, and social duties. Who the real compiler and promulgator of the Institutes was, is not known".*

Manu's eight forms of marriage are all specified in the Epic as well as in the Grihya Sutras. The filial piety of the ancient Hindus is notably manifested in the performance of offering oblations to the dead with religious ceremonies and gifts. The reading of the Epics was enjoined. The offering to the father is said to be the essential point on the question of the law of inheritance. In fact, it was treated as the principle evidence of kinship, on which the title to the patrimony was founded. The very name Putra (son) is ascribed to have originated from the performance of the rite which rescues the parent from hell (Put) (Manu, IX, 138).

Marriage in ancient India was regarded as a religious duty and a purificatory rite, and it is held to be one of the most important initiations like Upanayana. The birth of children initiates man and woman into the true idea of unselfish love, devotion and sacrifice. They are the keys to open the gates of Heaven and the ancient Hindus justly regarded that a son saved the parent from hell. The most important subject connected with property is the law of inheritance (daya) treated of in the IX book in Manu. The famous Jimutbahan was said to be the author of a book called Dayabhaga, *i.e*, laws of inheritance and partition, which is particularly applicable to Bengalees only, and Mitakshara of Vijnanesvara is acknowledged in the rest of India. The fight between Bibhabasu and Supratika, the two brothers, over the division of the paternal estate raises the question of ancient Hindu law in the Astika Parva, Chapter XXIX, about partition. The old law and

*Dr. Monier Williams' "Indian Wisdom," pages 212—214.

custom are not adhered to by the younger brother Supratika. This important fact gives a clue to the place where the incident in question took place. Only the Bengal School took exception to the ancient law of inheritance and partition. Manu IX says:—

"The eldest brother may take the paternal property, entirely into his own hands and the rest may live under his control exactly as they used to live in their father's time". (105 verse).

The object of this is explained by the elder brother Bibhabasu as follows:—

"Kashyapa said:—That great Rishi was not willing to keep his wealth joint with his brother. Supratika always spoke of a partition. Some time after Vivavasu told his brother Supratika· 'It is from foolishness, blinded by wealth, that many wish to divide (paternal) wealth. But as soon as it is partitioned, they begin to quarrel from the blindness arising from wealth. And enemies in the guise of friends, cause estrangement between ignorant and selfish brothers. They confirm their quarrels by pointing out faults, and thus they fall one by one. Absolute ruin very soon overtakes those (brothers) that are separated. Therefore, good men never approve of the partition amongst brothers, who, when divided, do not have any regard for Sastras or Gurus. As you, without regarding my advice, impelled by the desire of separation, wish to partition the wealth, for this, O Supratika, you will become an elephant.' Thus being cursed Supratika told Vivavasu. 'You will become an aquatic tortoise.' Thus being cursed by each other Supratika and Vivavasu, both fools, now live as a tortoise and an elephant. Owing to their wrathful nature they have both become inferior animals".*

King Bali's sons were the kings of the five provinces Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Suhma and Pundra. It seems that during their time the ancient rule of partition was over-ruled.† The Ramayana, VII, Canto CXXI, also bears out the divisions amongst the sons of Rama, and Satrughna. Kusabati, Srabasti, Mathura and Baidesha were the kingdoms of the two sons Kusa and Lova of Rama, and Subahu and Baidesha of Satrughna. At the end of the Ramayana it is said that, after the disappearance of Rama, the kingdom of Ayodhya was lost for years. It was not revived until the days of king Rishava. The Ramayana proves the ancient law; the four sons of Dasaratha were upholders of it in their life-time only. Bharata did not ascend the throne during the exile of Rama though he could have done so by virtue of the boon his mother got from his father. This decides the difference of the age of the Astika Parva of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Astika Parva is Yajnavalkya's addition after the Satapatha Brahmana.

The annotator Nilkantha, in the explanatory note of Chapter 217, Shanti Parva, which deals with the aim of Narayana sage from whom

*The Mahabharata, Chapter XXIX, pages 47-48, Adi Parva, verses 16—24.

†(See) Adi Parva, Chapter CIV, verses 48—50.

Mahabharata emanated, says that Yajnavalkya was the great Yogi expounder of religion, where, by Yoga, one can conceive the nature of the soul in man.

"Bhisma said:—He does not know Brahma who does not know the four topics, namely, dreams, dreamless sleep, imminent and transcendent Brahma, as also what is Manifest (viz, the body), and what is Unmanifest (the intelligent soul), which the great Rishi (Narayana) has described as Tattwam (pure principle). That which is manifest is subject to death. That which is unmanifest transcends death. The Rishi Narayana has described the religion of inclination. Upon that depends the entire universe with its mobile and immobile creatures. The religion of disinclination again leads to the unmanifest and eternal Brahma The Creator (Brahman) has described the religion of inclination. Inclination indicates re-birth or return. Disinclination, on the other hand, indicates the highest end.......The whole universe, fettered by desire, is revolving like a wheel. As the fibres of a lotus stalk overspread themselves into every part of the stalk, likewise the fibres of desire, which are without beginning or end, spread themselves over every part of the body. As a weaver drives his threads into a cloth by means of his shuttle, similarly the threads that constitute the fabric of the universe are woven by the shuttle of Desire. He who understands the changes of Nature, Nature herself, and Purusha, becomes free from Desire and acquires Liberation The divine sage Narayana, that refuge of the universe, for the sake of mercy towards all creatures, distinctly laid down these means for the acquisition of immortality."*

The great Epic Mahabharata, by examples, tried to solve this great question—how to replace the actual by the ideal. Yoga says self-sacrifice, but there was another path which the school of knowledge and personal influence preached. Kapila stood against the priesthood and sacrificial institutions. He was above self-interest—this was the ideal which got supremacy over the actual. The blood of the martyr is the seed of the temple of God. Dadhichi, Sakti, etc., laid down their lives for the ideal and king Janmejoya and others did likewise, as the great Epic points out, to declare to the world that they were men not so much concerned with their own pleasures and vindication of their prestige and power as with those of their society, whose ideals they were. They had to act on the principle that their prized personal influences could replace the actual by the ideal.

This should not be lost sight of; that there is always the distinction between absolute fidelity to the ideal and a compromise with the actual. In the realm of ethics a compromise between the true and false is high treason. The cause of religious and social reform in Ancient India demanded whole-hearted consecration to the cause, in direct opposition to the limited area which orthodoxy then prescribed. Persecution must necessarily await him who steps outside the realm of orthodoxy. It was for this that the great author of the Mahabharata put forward ideal

* The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CCXVII, verses 1—4, page 321 and verses 34—38, page 323.

patriarchs in Bhisma, Drona and Karna, who were not on the side of Krishna, the great reformer and hero of the day, with whom the great kings Drupada, Birata, Matsya and the Pandavas allied to use force wherever necessary to convert the wicked and curb the evil propensities that ran so high in those days. Madhu, Namuchi and Britta were killed by Narayana and Indra. Kartaviryarjuna and Ravana were killed by the two Ramas, and Kansa, Sisupala, Jarasandha and Durjodhana were killed by Krishna and the Pandavas.

Rama was made to play the role of an ideal king and hero when he was obliged not to stand by the courage of his convictions lest he set a bad example to society. It was for this that he exiled his faithful and beloved queen Sita. But in the case of Draupadi it was not the same. She stands on a higher pedestal as an ideal queen. Yudhisthira, unlike Rama, was called upon to sacrifice the courage of his convictions in order to avoid inflicting secret pain on the sentiments of society and his subjects, to whom he was bound by the fealty of service, love and admiration. The Pandavas and Kunti, Krishna and Draupadi represent characters of the spiritual world in contrast to the moral or social domain.

History gives no set of rules on matrimonial matters by which the marriage choice was to be made. It is not understood that virtue was to mean that painful facility with which a wife reserved her heart for a husband only. Adultery brings more evils than marriage does blessings. Marriage has to contend against breaches of confidence, but the laws of love can only blend man and woman together so firmly that nothing can separate them. Marriage is a necessary institution for the maintenance of society, but it will be contrary to nature if one is made the slave of the other. In a true marriage the bride represents the queen of the moral and spiritual world, she moves in a medium of grace and elegance to be loved by all with whom she comes in contact. The object of her movement is not to arouse desire in her husband only or pleasing him whom she loves.

In a true marriage love is her religion by liberal education, her sole dreams are more of intellectual enjoyment than merely physical. To her the charms of youth or enjoyment of life are not the only luggage of love. Love is as much a necessity for human existence as a piece of bread. Poets and historians have revealed the power of human love. Morals are the arts of hypocricy if there is no breath of some kind of politeness of the soul, which is called virtue. Morality and religion suffer if they are to be weighed by calculation and the mere laws of the land. Law, religion and morality depend on the progress of time and vary with the standards of human culture Virtue in man and woman

cannot be worked out with the precision of mathematical rules or calculations. It will be leading the human race to moral suicide, if all men and women are to be judged by one standard or law. There is a social dilemma which arises from the balancing and scheduling of public virtue on the basis of mathematical calculations on the question of marriage. Are there not people ready to accept happiness and virtue at the hands of legislatures and critics?

In society, as in legislation, everything bristles with so many 'ifs' and 'buts' that there can be no abstract solution; they create only abject prejudices. Love is the poetry of the senses. It rules the destiny of man and woman and can make him or her great by culture of mind. Love is a union of desire and tenderness, and marriage is a science. Happiness in marriage does not come from the observance of the sacred rites and the blessings of the priests, but by direct, perfect understanding between two souls. The union is a divine gift of thought after having enjoyed the happiness of being loved reciprocally. The genius of a husband and a wife lies in handling directly the various shades of pleasure and developing them in such a manner as will realise the soul force in the heart of love. Talent in love consists in combining the power of imagination with that of execution. Lasting love is what keeps the forces of two beings in equilibrium. The duration of the attachment of the two souls increases in proportion to their resistance to obstacles which society chances to put in the way of their happiness.

It has given rise to romances. The ancient poets knew well how to put a mythological touch to ancient tradition on the marriage problem of their day so as to play upon the imagination of the people. Such was the case with Draupadi's marriage. A woman then has no justification for reproaching her husband, on the score of the legal compact in virtue of which she belongs to him, who stakes her at dice play or declares to the world that she is the wife of the five brothers on the political grounds of averting a dreadful war and regaining a lost kingdom and prosperity by a marriage alliance.

The Hindu Epic is the meeting place of the six systems of Hindu philosophy and an attempt has been made to interpret its mystery in the same way. The Ramayana treats of Yoga philosophy, whereas the Mahabharata was originally the meeting place of Samkhya and Vedanta till it became that of all six systems.

Vyasa was the author of Vedanta and his disciples sought to prove the first principles of Vedanta Sutra, the union of Purusha (man) with Prakriti (woman), in Draupadi's marriage. Krishna was the Supreme Purusha Narayana. In Vedanta philosophy the union of action with

self-knowledge of the soul is found. Some hold that the five breaths of life were represented in the five Pandavas. All these esoteric explanations may be right in their way, but the aim and object of the Epic, as shown in it, are not these. The three steps of Baman, one of the incarnations of God in the sacrifice of Bali, with which the glory of God is sung, are explained in the Epic as follows:—

"Achievements, Prosperity, Intelligence, and the Path that leads to the celestial region, are all there where this One, *viz.*, the illustrious Vishnu of three steps, is. He is the thirty-three gods headed by Indra. There is no doubt in this. He is the one Ancient God. He is the foremost of all gods. He is the refuge of all creatures. He is without beginning and without destruction. He is unmanifest. He is the great Destroyer of Madhu. Gifted with mighty energy, He has taken birth (among men) for doing the purposes of the gods. This Madhava is the expounder of the most difficult truths about Profit or Wealth, and He is also their achiever. O son of Pritha, the victory you have got over your enemies, your peerless achievements, the dominion you have acquired over the whole Earth, are all owing to having Narayana espouse your cause. The fact of your having got the inconceivable Narayana for your protector and refuge, enabled you to become an Adharyyu (chief sacrificer) for pouring multitudes of kings as libations on the burning fire of battle. This Krishna was your great sacrificial ladle, resembling the all-destroying fire which appears at the end of the cycle. Durjodhana, with his sons, brothers and kinsmen, was much to be pitied inasmuch as, moved by anger, he made war with Hari and the wielder of Gandiva. Many sons of Diti, many foremost of Danavas, of huge bodies and vast strength, have died in the fire of Krishna's discus like insects in a forest fire. How incapable then must human beings be of fighting against that Krishna—human beings who, O foremost of men, are shorn of strength and power. As regards jaya, he is a powerful Yogin resembling the all-destroying cycle-fire in energy. Capable of drawing the bow equally with both hands, he is always in the van of the fight. With his energy, O king, he has killed all the soldiers of Suyodhana. Listen to me as I tell you what Mahadeva, having the bovine bull for the emblem on his standard, had recited to the ascetics on the breast of Himavat. His utterances form a Purana......Having heard the words of Vyasa, as also of the highly intelligent Narada, I have described to you the adorableness of Krishna. I have myself added, from my own knowledge, something to that account. ...Indeed, through the fault of Durjodhana, of Karna, of Shakuni, and of Duhshasana as the fourth that the Kurus have died.' *

Royal and priestly families inter-married. Vyasa's grand-daughter by Suka was married to Anuha's king and Brahmadatta's mother. It is evident that Vyasa had relationship with the Panchal's king and might have interested himself in Draupadi's marriage to restore the Pandavas to their paternal estate. This is to some extent a historical fact which the Mahabharata mentions. The name Anga, the son of Prajapati Manu from which perhaps Anga kingdom derives its name, gives an indication that the first seat of Aryan civilisation was on the Gangetic plain. From kings Gaya, Ayus and Mithi, the kingdoms of Gaya, Ayodhya and Mithila sprang up. Likewise, from the names of the kings Utkal, Kuru and Hasti, the places were known after them.

* Anushasana Parva, Chapter CXLVIII, pages 23—33, verses 43 and 61.

Ayodhya-Videha, Pratisthan, Vaisali, Anga and Banga played important parts in the political and religious development of India. Ilabarta is the name of the kingdom of Ila. This Ilabarta is identified with Kamaksha, where tradition says that the male becomes female and Ila was said to have been converted into a female.

The Mahabharata stands forth before the world, not only as an embodiment of ancient Hindu philosophical thought and wisdom, but also as a record of the intellectual activities of the royal families and their priests as well as of the great performers like Kapila. Kapila's discourse is a delectable diversion on knowledge. The Epic is full of philosophical episodes of the great Videha king. The Ramayana has none of these things, and there lies the superiority of the Mahabharata. Public recitals and expositions of the Indian Epics were the true causes of their revision to make them adaptable to the tastes of the audience, and this was responsible for the great changes in the plots and history behind them. The principal characters have thus become the property of the Indian household. They afforded ample material for great poets like Bhasa, Magha, Bharavi and Bhababhuti to give their imaginations full play, and they were admired for the results. Their imaginations, more or less, were responsible for the revisions of the great Epics.

Of all the provinccs of India, Bengal took the lead with reference to the publication of the Epics. The work was first undertaken by a Committee of Public Instruction, was completed by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1839, and is still considered to be the authoritative edition of the great Epic. An attempt is being made to correlate the different provincial texts in order to arrive at the original texts, if possible and practicable, by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Society, but it is very regrettable that that society should not first have taken up a study of the contents to find out the true historical facts with the plots and characters of the Epics before they took up the question of texts. European scholars have been at great pains to prove that there were Christian ideas behind the Epics. It has been definitely found that the different sections of the Mahabharata were of later origin and did not belong to one definite period. The learned Hopkins took great trouble to make an analytical survey by means of the different literary compositions and philosophical ideas in his well-known work, and found the Epic physiology common to both the Indian Epics. There is one significant fact in the revised Epics, which must have taken place at one time during the Hindu revival, that the end justifies the means. It is clearly mentioned that diversion from truth at the marriage ceremony is allowable.

"Sarmishtha said:—It is not sinful to speak falsehood in the following five cases, namely, in joke, in respect of women to be associated with, in marriage, in prospect

of immediate death, and at the time of the loss of one's whole fortune. O King, it is not true that he is fallen who does not speak out the truth when asked (for there are occasions when to speak falsehood is an act of piety). The falsehood is sinful when one (harmful) object is to be accomplished."*

It was at such an age that the great Indian Epics were revised. It was for this the unlawful things were introduced as lawful, making the genuineness of characters doubted and transforming them into more or less allegorical poems. Nor is this all. Many theories were advanced regarding the successive and slowly accumulating additions and alterations of the Indian Epics. The Mahabharata, as it is, is more an ancient institute of law or a Dharma Shastra than a record of events or history. Some say it is interded to inculate philosophical tenets through characters or by an allegorical struggle between the Sun and Darkness, and that the original poems were altered to suit the changed condition of things and affairs. Some say it sang the glory of the victorious or defeated kings in the war of the Kuru-Panchalas, or the Kuru and Pandavas or, finally, the general body of Bharata kings. It was not a question whether the Mahabharata was originally a pro-Kauravite or pro-Pandavite poem, or whether hero Karna or king Asoka was reflected in the triumph of Vaishnavite over the Saivite elements or the struggle between Brahmans and Jainas, Buddhas or the Pauranics full of mythologies.

The fact is that the current Mahabharata discloses fragments of all kinds of literature, justifying the many theories hitherto sought to be established by learned Euiopean and Indian scholars. Flee's Gupta Inscription, page 137, line 19, mentions an inscription of the Satasahaeri Samhita by Parasarasuta Vedavyasa Vyasa. The date of the inscription seems to have been somewhere near the sixth century A. D. This cannot be ignored. International hatred or the persecution of the followers of different cults have not been found in the Mahabharata save in the case of Charvaka. Rishava is one of the early Tirthankars of the Jains and an account of him is given. Devpal seems to have been his follower. Kapila's discourse is given as well as those of his disciples Pancasikha and Sulabha. Yudhisthira accuses himself of being befooled and Durjodhana has no fault in the Mahabharata. There are the versions which speak in favour of the Kauravas, whereas there is also great praise for the Pandavas when they retire to the forest after the dice play. Buhler gives proof in his book, 'Contributions to the History of Mahabharata' that the Mahabharata in its present form is nothing but a Smriti and existed in the fourth century A. D. The Bible or Buddhistic sacred books do not command such an influence on the general body of followers as do the Indian Epics on Hindus.

*The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter LXXXII, verses 16-17.

The Epic world is interested in the Indian Epics, and European scholars like Max Muller, Larsen, Weber, Levi, Goldstucker, Wilson, Colebroke, Monier Williams, etc., have evinced great interest in and written about the Indian Epics, and their work is maintained by other well-known scholars too numerous to notice. But it must be said that their angle of vision cannot be the same as that of the Indians, although they have solved many things very difficult and abstruse for which every credit is due to them, for to evolve order out of the glaring chaotic mass is a most difficult task.

The bards of the different royal families of India were all men of education and poetic genius. They knew how to enliven the glory of the fallen heroes who were killed in the great battle of Kurukshettra so that their descendants might follow in the footsteps of their illustrious ancestors. The current Mahabharata thus became bard poetry of a later age. But fortunately the old discourses were not lost. The different stages of development can be traced from them. It is evident that the great Epic has lost its original character as a faithful history of the different times. This has got to be ascertained from the instructive discourses to heroes and heroines of the plots. The chivalry of the age made the book, originally Vedic and a moral instruction manual, into an exaggerated war history. Th bereaved royal families were thus consoled and the table of contents mentions it with regard to Dhritarastra by Sanjoya. There are the actual discourses between Sanjoya and Dhritarastra, and Gita is one of them. The great generals of the war Bhisma, Drona, Karna and Salya were each given one big section to describe their exploits and glories. Vyasa had no hand in them; they were the creation of the Kuru Court bards, like Sanjoya, with those of their great allies. Reading these accounts one can easily be prejudiced, in the manner the European scholars have been, led into believing that the great Epic is pro-Kauravite. But Vyasa's book, as recited in the University of Saunaka, is as follows :—

"Souti said:—The Brahmanas spoke of many things, founded on the Vedas, in the intervals of their duties, but Vyasa recited the wonderful and great history, called the Bharata. Saunaka said: —I desire to hear that sacred history called Mahabharata, that spreader of the fame of the Pandavas, which Krishna Dwaipayana, asked by Janmejoya, caused to be duly recited in the intervals of the sacrifice." *

The Mahabharata is a medley of two sections, Pro-Kauravite and Pro-Pandavite. Vyasa was the author of the latter and Sanjoya and others of the former. Besides the original Bharata Samhita, there are Yajnavalkya's additions and alterations and dramatic transformations by the bard poetry of a later age. Bhisma is a reciter of the Maha-

* The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter LIX, page 78, verses 5—7.

bharata to Yudhisthira. He defines the nine cardinal duties to be observed by all men.

"The control of anger, truthfulness of speech, justice, forgiveness, begetting children upon one's own married wives, purity of conduct, avoidance of quarrel, simplicity, and maintenance of dependents,—these are the nine duties which all the four orders should follow."*

It is evident that at the time Bhisma recited and Yudhisthira lived, the caste system was materialised. He mentioned that Brahma composed a work on the subject of religion, profit and pleasure of a hundred thousand verses, which was abridged in the following manner:

"In view, however, of the gradual decrease of the span of human existence, the divine Shiva abridged that highly important science compiled by Brahman. The abridgment, called Vaishalaksha, consisting of ten thousand chapters, was then received by Indra, devoted to Brahman and possessed of great ascetic merit. The divine Indra again abridged it into a work containing five thousand chapters and named it Vahudantaka. Afterwards the powerful Brihaspati, by his intelligence, further abridged the work, into one containing three thousand chapters and named it Varhaspatya. Next, that famous teacher of Yoga, Kavi of unlimited wisdom, abridged it further into a work of a thousand chapters. Considering the period of human existence and the general decrease (of everything), great Rishis did thus, for the well-being of the world, abridge that science. Then, approaching that lord of creatures, *viz.*, Vishnu, the God said to him,—'point out. O God, that one among men who deserves to reign supreme over the rest.' The divine and powerful Narayana, thinking a little, created by his will! a son born of his energy, named Virajas. The highly blessed Virajas, however, did not desire to rule on Earth. His mind, O son of Pandu, was bent for a life of renunciation. Virajas had a son named Krittimat. He to cast off pleasure and enjoyment. Krittimat had a son named Karddama, Karddama also practised severe austerities. The lord of creatures, Karddama, begot a son named Ananga, who became a protector of creatures, pious and well-read in the science of punishment. Ananga begot a son named Ativala, well-read in politics. Obtaining extensive empire after the death of his father, he became a slave of his passions. Mrityu, O king, had a mind begotten daughter named Sunita, well-known over the three worlds. She was married to Ativala and gave birth to a son named Vena. Vena, a slave of anger and malice, became impious and tyrannical towards all creatures. The Brahmavadin Rishis killed him with Kusa blades inspired with Mantras." †

Here is the genealogy of the Vena line of ancient kings, from the name of whose son Prithu the name Prithibi (earth) originated. This chapter gives the history of the birth of the goddess Sri (Lakshmi) and highly intelligent Dharma, which are represented in Draupadi and Yudhisthira. Their issue was Artha.

"At that time a golden lotus sprang from Vishnu's brow. The Goddess Sri was born of that lotus. She became the consort of the highly intelligent Dharma. Upon Sri, O son of Pandu, Dharma begot Artha. All the three, *viz.*, Dharma and Artha and Sri, were established in a king. A person, upon the wane of his merit, descends from Heaven to Earth, and is born as a king well read in the

* Shanti Parva, Chapter LX, page 88, verse 7.

† The Mahabharata, Chapter LIX, Shanti Parva, verses 81—94.

science of punishment. Such a person becomes great and is really a portion of Vishnu on Earth. He becomes highly intelligent and obtains superiority over others." *

The work of Brahma referred to herein consisted of the following subjects:—

"Thus, O Yudhisthira, the histories of the past, the origin of the great Rishis, the holy rivers, the planets and stars and asterisms, the duties of the four modes of life, the four kinds of Homa, the characteristics of the four castes and the four branches of learning were all described in that work (of Brahma). Whatever objects or things, O son of Pandu, there are on Earth, were all described in that work of the Grandfather. Histories, the Vedas and the Nyaya (logic) were all described in it, as also penances, knowledge, abstention from injury to all creatures, truth, falsehood, and high morality. Adoration of aged persons, gifts, purity of conduct, readiness for work and mercy towards all creatures, were very fully treated in it."†

Bhisma recited a verse sung by Narayana on the duties of men as follows:—

"The illustrious and great Rishis cite a verse sung by Narayana himself, highly important and endued with high ascetic merit. Hear me as I repeat it. By truth, simplicity, worship of guests, acquisition of religion and profit, an enjoyment of one's own married wife one should enjoy various kinds of happiness both here and hereafter. The great Rishis have said that the maintenance of sons and wives, and the study of the Vedas, are the duties of those who follow this high mode of life. That Brahmana who, always engaged in the celebration of sacrifices, duly passes this mode of life and properly discharges all its duties, obtains blessed rewards in Heaven. Upon his death, the rewards sought by him become eternal. Indeed these wait upon him for eternity like servants ever careful to execute the orders of their master. Always studying the Vedas, silently reciting the mantras obtained from his preceptor, worshipping all the gods, O Yudhisthira, dutifully attending upon and serving his preceptor with his own body smeared with clay and filth, the person, leading the Brahmacharyya mode of life, should always observe rigid vows and, with senses under restraint, should always pay attention to the instructions he has received. Meditating on the Vedas and satisfying all the duties he should live, dutifully serving his preceptor and always bowing to him. Unengaged in the six kinds of work and never doing with attachment any kind of acts, never showing favour or disfavour to anyone, and doing good even to his enemies,—these, O son, are the duties of a Brahmacharin."‡

This seems to be the essence of the Bharata Samhita, which Narayana preached to Narada.

"Bhisma said:—From acts originate various ties of affection and from those ties of affection spring sorrow or misery and from acts imbued with joy and sorrow proceeds the liability to birth and death. On account of the obligation of birth, one is compelled to live within the womb,—for the union of vital seed and *blood*. Living there is defiled with excreta, urine and phlegm, and always fouled with blood that is created there. Overwhelmed by thirst, the Intelligent Soul

* Chapter LIX, Shanti Parva, verses 131—134.

† The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter LIX, page 87, verses 139—144.

‡ The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter LXI, verses 13—21.

becomes fettered by anger and the rest that have been described above." It seeks, however, to escape those evils. In this respect, women must be considered as instruments which set the stream of Creation agoing. By their nature, women are Kshetra, and men are Kshetrajna in respect of qualities. Therefore, wise persons should not pursue women especially. Indeed, women are like dreadful Mantra powers. They stupefy persons shorn of wisdom. They are sunk in the quality of Darkness. They are the eternal embodiment of the senses. On account of the strong desire that men cherish for women, offspring proceed from them, due to the action of the seminal fluid. As one throws off from his person such vermin as are born there but as are not on that account any part of oneself, so should one cast off those vermin of one's body that are called children, who, though regarded as one's own are not his own in sooth. From the seminal fluid and sweat creatures spring from the body, influenced by pristine acts or in the course of nature. Therefore, a wise man should feel no regard for them. The quality of Darkness rests on that of Ignorance. The quality of Goodness, again, rests on that of Darkness. Darkness which is unmanifest overspreads itself on knowledge, and creates the phenomena of Intelligence and Consciousness. That knowledge possessing the attributes of Intelligence and Consciousness has been described as the seed of individual Souls. That, again, which is the seed of such knowledge is called the Jiva (or Individual Soul). On account of acts and the virtue of time, the Soul goes through birth and repeated rounds of re-birth. As in a dream the Soul plays as if invested with a body which, of course, is due to the action of the mind, similarly, it gets in the mother's womb a body in consequence of qualities and propensities created by pristine deeds".*

This is the theory of the transmigration of souls and the theory of Karma which the Yoga system of Yajnavalkya preaches, as is shown in the degraded births of elephant and tortoise which forms the prologue of the great Epic by Yajnavalkya. The different editions give different versions. For instance, in the Pouranic Mahabharata the Pandavas represented different Vedic gods Indra, Marut, Aswin Kumars in another the five forms of Indra. The different editions are jumbled together and revised, which makes the current Mahabharata so very mysterious and irreparable. Sutas made it a royal panegyric. What it really was is said in Chapter CCXVII:—

"The sage Narayana described the religion of inclination on which seats the entire creation. The religion of renunciation leads to the eternal unmanifest Brahma."

The relationship of Purusha and Supreme Soul is described as follows:—

"Bhisma said:—A person putting on a turban has his head circled with three folds of a piece of cloth. Similarly the embodied Soul is invested with the three qualities of Goodness, Darkness, and Ignorance. But though thus invested, the Soul is not identical with those qualities. Hence these four topics, which are covered by these four considerations, should be understood. One who understands all this is never stupefied when he tries to form conclusions. He who wishes to secure high prosperity should become pure in mind, and practising austere practices regarding the body and the senses, should devote himself to Yoga without seeking for fruits."†

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*The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXIII, Shanti Parva, page 317, verses 5—14.

†The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXVII, Shanti Parva, page 322, verses 11—14.

During the ascendency of Buddhistic religion, Puranas and Epics were traduced and misused for the propagation of the Buddhist religion. Examples are not wanting and European learned men like Dr. Winternitz could think of introducing it in a book as follows:—

"Draupadi, however, one of the most magnificent female characters of the Epic, appears in the Jataka as an example of feminine depravity, as she is not content with her five husbands, but also commits adultery with a hunch-backed servant."*

In this way Buddhistic literature tried to undo the works of Hindu authors. The fragments of old Hindu sacred books were reconstructed during the Hindu revival after the Buddhistic fall. It was then 'Adhyatma-Ramayana' gave out that Balmiki lived among robbers though a Brahmin by birth. This was also quoted by the same learned author with other denunciations of the great author.

"Balmik, *i.e.*, Valmiki, is worshipped as a kind of saint by the caste of the scavengers in Eastern Punjab. (The legends of Punjab I. (1884), page 529f."†

All these speak of the light in which the Western scholar treats the reputed Hindu poet Valmiki in his book. What should have been treated with contempt has found an honoured place in his book.

Yogavasistha is treated as an appendix to the Ramayana by Dr. Keith. It was summarised in the 9th century by Gauda Abhinanda in the Yogavasisthasara (p. 480). Suffice it to mention here that Valmiki has been shown to be a Vedic grammarian and a learned descendant of the well-known Bhrigu family. He was only accused of finding fault with Sagnick or Agnihotric Brahmanas for which he expiated. It is mentioned in the Mahabharata. Nor is this all. Yajnavalkaya's edition of the Mahabharata lingers in the Astika Parva, and in certain comparisons where Valmiki and Vyasa are mentioned. The following portion of Chapter LV will speak for itself:—

"O son of Parikshit, O best of the Bharata race, your this sacrifice is like the sacrifices of Goya, king Sashavindu, and king Visravana. Blessings be upon those who are dear to us. O son of Parikshit, O best of the Bharata race, your this sacrifice is like the sacrifices of Nriga, Ajameda, and (Rama) the son of Dasaratha. Blessings be upon those who are dear to us! O son of Parikshit, O best of the Bharata race, your this sacrifice is like the sacrifice of king Yudhisthira, the son of a deity and a descendant of Ajameda race, famous even in Heaven. Blessings upon those who are dear to us! O son of Parikshit, O best of the Bharata race, your this sacrifice is like the sacrifice of Krishna Dwaipayana, the son of Satyavati, in which he himself acted as the chief priest. Blessings be upon those who are dear to us! These (learned men), that are sitting here, are as

*Dr. Winternitz "A History of Indian Literature," Volume I, page 472.

†Dr. Winternitz "A History of Indian Literature," page 503, Foot-note.

effulgent as the sun, and they make your this sacrifice like the sacrifice of the slayer of Vitra (Indra). There is nothing for them to know, and gifts made to them become inexhaustible. There is not a Ritwija in all the worlds equal to your Ritwija Dwaipayana. His disciples, becoming Ritwijas, competent in their duties, travel over the earth. The noble bearer of libations, Vivavasu and Chitravanu (fire), having gold for his vital seed and black smokes on its way, carries these your libations of ghee to the celestials. There is no other king in this world equal to you in protecting his subjects. I am well pleased with your continual abstinence. You are either Varuna, Yama or Dharmaraja. You are the protector of all creatures in this world, like Indra himself, thunder-bolt in hand. There is no man in this world so great as you. There is no king who is your equal in sacrifices. You are like Khalwanga, Nobhaga, and Deelip. You are like Jayati and Mandhata in prowess. You are equal to the Sun in splendour. O royal sage of excellent vows, you are like Bhisma. You are like Valmiki of power concealed. Like Vasishtha you have controlled your anger. Your sovereignty is like that of Indra and your splendour like that of Narayana. You are learned in the administration of justice like Yama, and you are adorned with all qualifications like Krishna. You are the home of the wealth that belongs to the Vasus, you are the main-spring of all sacrifices. You are equal to Damvodvava in strength, you are learned both in Sastras and arms like Parasurama. You are equal to Aurva and Trita in strength. You inspire terror with your looks like Vagiratha."*

There is a clear reference to Krishna Dvaipayana and Ritwija Dvaipayana in Janmejoya's sacrifice. Are they one and the same person or different persons? But it cannot be overlooked that one was the chief priest in Yudhisthira's sacrifice and the other was a Ritwija in that of Janmejoya, a space of time of four generations. But Vyasa was made immortal. If this was really so, then the great Epics and Puranas would have come down to the present day intact. There would have been hardly any occasion for revisions and reconstructions. It seems that the Dvaipayana family were the priests of the Pandava family.

Vyasa and Valmiki, the great authors of the Indian Epics, wrote their books to reform the evil inclinations of the kings and their subjects, and to establish law, order, and peace in the realm with the high ideal of religious emancipation. Rama and Krishna, with their ancilliary co-operators, were represented as the most cultured men of the age. They were revered and worshipped as gods and demi-gods by their admirers, but they refused to be satisfied with such associations and did their duties as common men. This is quite evident in both the Epics. Man is God and God is man; it is the action which decides who is who. This is the clear preaching of the Indian Epics. What Valmiki could not fulfil in his Ramayana, Vyasa did in his Mahabharata. Man passes to heaven and God comes to earth through the process of birth and death, but Vyasa discovered a new path. Man can be translated to heaven in person, and Yudhisthira and Sudarshana, two kings, did so as self-conquered heroes who were not overcome by the illusion or Maya practised

* The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter LV, verses 4—16, page 74.

by their queens. The theory of evolution of man to God was fully established in Rama and Krishna, who died like ordinary mortals.

The piercing of the arrow in love affairs is mentioned in the Atharva Veda, where Kama is a Hindu god of marriage who is invested with five arrows to arouse the dormant five senses of man by woman. The Puranas say that the first marriage of Siva and Parbati was sanctified by actual flinging of the arrows, but the process was not approved of by the great God Siva. He assigned the place of the God Kama in the mind of man and woman, but the great Epic author centred it differently in Draupadi and Yudhisthira. The marriage of Draupadi took place in the piercing of the arrow by Arjuna (Kama), instrumental in the ceremony itself, to ignite love between Draupadi and Yudhisthira according to the Atharva Veda. Draupadi with all her beauty and culture failed to subdue the five senses of Yudhisthira. The ideal Yudhisthira was not found wanting in sufficient self-control and self-sacrifice to ascend to heaven in person, which Rama and Krishna could not do.

The theory of evolution is nowhere better established in the theory and practice of religion than in the great Epic. Whoever might be the author of this conception he was a great man worthy of being adored with the immortality of Vyasa. It must be a source of sincere gratification to the Hindus that the glory of the great Epic cannot be obliterated in spite of the vast mass of accretion, interpolation and anachronism which has offered specious grounds for all sorts of speculations and unjust accusations. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata were recast one after the other, as there is a great resemblance between Meghnada and Arjuna, Bhima and Kumbhukarna, Sita and Draupadi. Arjuna was represented in the Mahabharata more as a knight errant and married Chitrangada, Ulupi and Subhadra when he was to observe Brahmacharya.

The Mahabharata says that Arjuna had dispelled the false fears of Yudhisthira before the great battle took place, whereas Gita describes Arjuna as a coward, and Sri Krishna could not make him fight until and unless he showed him his Birat Murti (figure). Gita is Upanishad and Mahabharata is not. It is clearly mentioned in the table of contents that Sanjoya made an Upanishad to solace king Dhritarastra, who was overwhelmed with grief after the battle. Gita seems to have been such an Upanishad, where Sri Krishna plays a different role from that of the Mahabharata, as also Arjuna. Everything is ascribed to Sri Krishna's greatness as a God. Gita describes that the Birat Murti (figure) is witnessed by Arjuna alone, but the Mahabharata describes Sri Krishna's assuming such appearance before the Kuru Court when Durjodhana

intended to imprison him and before the sage Uttamka when he was going to curse him for not preventing the great carnage which took place in the great field of Kurukshettra. There is a discourse between Sanjoya and Dhritarastra to this effect in the Mahabharata. This might be the Kuru Mahabharata, which the Western scholars found.

The Macedonian invasion of India could make no impression on the minds of the Indian people. During the Buddhistic period inscriptions on rocks and columns were the means of declaration of edicts in the empire. During this period of Buddhistic influence on Hindu society, worship and religion was very great. The revision, which took place in the days of the celebrated king Vikramaditya, was a dramatic edition of the Epic. Before the Hindu religion had sufficient time to be reorganised, the Moslem rule greatly interfered with such lasting reorganisation. Akbar was not a man of letters but an inborn politician and administrator. It struck him when he came to the throne as a mere boy under the care of Bairam Khan, that he should not be a boy who would be managed but a master of people who would be obeyed. He was thoroughly independent and a great patron of literature and a wise religious man. He was convinced in his own mind that it would be impossible to rule India by standing armies without taking into account their sentiments. The bigotry and narrowness evinced by the leaders of the various Moslem sects disgusted Akbar. He conceived the great idea of unity in the creed of Islam and liked to be the spiritual guide of his subjects.

"Man's outward profession and the mere letter of Muhammadanism, without a heartfelt conviction, can avail nothing. I have forced many Brahmans, by fear of my power, to adopt the religion of my ancestors; but now that my mind has been enlightened with the beams of truth, I have become convinced that the dark clouds of conceit and the mist of self-opinion have gathered round you, and that not a step can be made in advance without the torch of proof. That course only can be beneficial which we select with clear judgment. To repeat the words of the creed, to perform circumcision, or to be prostrated on the ground from the dread of kingly power, can avail nothing in the sight of God:—

"Obedience is not in prostration on the earth:
Practice sincerity, for righteousness is not borne upon the brow,"*

"Attached as Akbar was to his learned and liberal-minded friends, Faizi and Abulfazl, he encouraged all who displayed a real love for learning and a true desire to acquire knowledge. He hated pretence and hypocrisy. He soon recognised that these two qualities underlay the professions of the Ulamas (Muhammadan doctors of learning) at his court. When he had found them out, he was disgusted with them, and resolved to spare no means of showing up their pretensions. 'He never pardoned', writes Professor Blochmann, 'pride and conceit, the conceit of learning was most hateful to him.' Hence the cry of the class affected by his action that he discouraged learning and learned men. He did nothing of the sort. There never has flourished in India a more generous encourager of the real thing.........†

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* Colonel G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, page 162.
† Colonel G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, pages 166-67.

"It would seem that Akbar paid great attention to the storing in his library of works obtained from outside his dominions, as well as of those Hindu originals and their translations which he was always either collecting or having rendered into Persian. Of this library the author of the Ain relates that it was divided into several parts. 'Some of the books are kept within, some without the Harem. Each part of the library is sub-divided, according to the value of the books and the estimation in which the sciences are held of which the books treat. Prose Books, Poetical Works, Hindi, Persian, Greek, Kashmirian, Arabic, are all separately placed. In this order they are also inspected. Experienced people bring them daily, and read them before his Majesty, who hears every book from the beginning to the end. At whatever page the readers daily stop, his Majesty makes with his own pen a mark, according to the number of the pages; and rewards the readers with presents of cash, either in gold or silver, according to the number of leaves read out by them. Among books of renown there are few which are not read in his Majesty's Assembly Hall; and there are no historical facts of past ages, or curiosities of science, or interesting points of philosophy, with which his Majesty, a leader of impartial sages, is unacquainted'. Then follows a long list of books specially affected by the sovereign, some of which have been referred to in preceding pages. I have, I think, stated enough to show the influence exercised by literary men and literature on the history of this reign. The influence, especially of the two learned brothers, Faizi and Abulfazl, dominated as long as they lived. That of Abulfazl survived him, for the lessons he had taught only served to confirm the natural disposition of his master. The principles which the brothers loved were the principles congenial to the disposition of Akbar. They were the principles of the widest toleration of opinion; of justice to all, independently of caste and creed; of alleviating the burdens resting on the children of the soil; of the welding together of the interests of all classes of the community, of the Rajput prince, proud of his ancient descent and inclined to regard the Muhammadan invader as an outcast and a stranger; of the Uzbek and Mughal noble, too apt to regard the country as his own by right of conquest, and its peoples as fit only to be his slaves: of the settlers of Afghan origin, who during four centuries had mingled with, and become a recognised part of the children of the soil; of the indigenous inhabitants, always ready to be moved by kindness and good treatment.*

"He had much confidence in his own judgment of men. He was admittedly a good physiognomist. Abulfazl wrote of him that 'he sees through some men at a glance', whilst even Baduni admits the claim, though with his usual inclination to sneering at all matters bearing on the Hindus, he declares that Akbar obtained the gift of insight from the Jogis (Hindu ascetics or magicians).†

"Akbar had not reigned long ere he recognised the importance of attaching to his throne the Hindu princes of Rajputana by a tie closer even than that of mere friendship. It is interesting to note how he managed to overcome the inborn prejudices of the high caste princes of Rajasthan to consent to a union which, in their hearts, the bulk of them regarded as a degradation. It would seem that his father, Humayun, had to a certain extent prepared the way. In his erudite and fascinating work, Colonel Tod relates how Humayun, in the earlier part of his reign, became the knight of the princess Kurnavati of Chitor, and pledged himself to her service. That service he loyally performed. He addressed her always as 'dear and virtuous sister'. He also won the regard of Raja Behari Mall of Amber, father of Bhagwan Das, so often mentioned in these pages. Akbar subsequently married his daughter, and becoming thus connected with the House of Ambar (Jaipur), could count upon

* Col. G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, pages 169—71.

† Col. G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, pages 178-79.

Bhagwan Das and his nephew and adopted son, Man Singh, one of the greatest of all his commanders, as his firmest friends. Writing in another page of Bhagwan Das, Colonel Tod describes him as 'the friend of Akbar, who saw the value of attaching such men to his throne'. He addf, 'and few men have ever enjoyed better opportunities of ascertaining the real feelings of the princes of Rajputana', but the name of Bhagwan Das is execrated as the first who sullied Rajput purity by matrimonial alliance with the Islamite. Prejudice is always strong, and nowhere stronger than in caste.*

"'Akbar', writes Colonel Tod, 'was the real founder of the empire of the Mughals, the first successful conqueror of Rajput independence. To this end his virtues were powerful auxiliaries, as by his skill in the analysis of the mind and its readiest stimulant to action, he was enabled to gild the chains with which he bound them. To these they became familiarised by habit, especially when the throne exerted its power in acts gratifying to national vanity, or even in ministering to the more ignoble passions'.†

"His first wife was his cousin, a daughter of his uncle, Hindal Mirza. She bore him no children, and survived him, living to the age of eighty-four. His second wife was also a cousin, being the daughter of a daughter of Babar, who had married Mirza Nuruddin Muhammad. She was a poetess, and wrote under the nom-de-plume, Makhfi (the concealed). His third wife was the daughter of Raja Bihari Mall and sister of Raja Bhagwan Das. He married her in 1560. The fourth wife was famed for her beauty; she had been previously married to Abdul Wasi. The fifth wife, mother of Jehangir, was a Jodhpur princess, Jodh Baei. As mother of the heir apparent, she held the first place in the harem. The sixth, seventh, and eight wives were Muhammadans.‡

"Under instructions from Akbar, Badauni translated the Ramayana from its original Sanskrit into Persian, as well as part of the Mahabharata. His historical work above referred to as the Tarikh-i-Badauni, and which is perhaps better known under its alternative title Muntakhabat-ul-Tawarikh, or Selections from the annals, is especially valuable for the views it gives of the religious opinions of Akbar and its sketches of the famous men of his reign. Badauni died about eleven years before the Emperor, and his great work, the existence of which he had carefully concealed, did not appear until some time during the reign of Jehangir. It is a very favourite book with the bigoted Muhammadans who disliked the innovations of Akbar, and it continued to be more and more prized as those innovations gradually gave way to the revival of persecution for thought's sake. It is perhaps unnecessary to give a record of the other learned men who contributed by their abilities, their industry, and their learning to the literary glory of the reign of Akbar. The immortal Ain contains a complete list of them, great and small. But, as concerning the encouragement given to arts and letters by the sovereign himself, it is fitting to add a few words". §

Badauni, the translator of the Indian Epics, was a remarkably pious, learned, orthodox Moslem, two years older than the Emperor.

* Col. G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, pages 181-182.

† Col. G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, page 183.

‡ Col. G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, pages 184-185.

§ Col. G. B. Malleson's "AKBAR" and the rise of the Mughal Empire, pages 168-169.

The tactics the Emperor employed to learn the literature of the Hindus are not well-known. It is given below from the well-known Dow's history of Hindustan :—

"Mohammad Akbar, being a Prince of elevated and extensive ideas, was totally divested of those prejudices for his own religion which men of inferior parts not only imbibe with their mother's milk, but retain throughout their lives. Though bred in all the strictness of the Mahommedan faith, his great soul, in his riper years, broke those chains of superstition and credulity with which his tutors had, in his early youth, fettered his mind. With a design to choose his own religion, or rather from curiosity, he made it his business to inquire minutely into all the systems of divinity which prevailed among mankind. The story of his being instructed in the Christian tenets, by a missionary from Portugal, is too well-known in Europe to require a place in this Dissertation. As almost all religions admit of proselytes, Akbar had good success in his inquiries till he came to his own subjects, the Hindus. Contrary to the practice of all other religious sects, they admit of no converts, but they allow that every one may go to Heaven his own way, though they perhaps suppose that theirs is the most expeditious method to obtain that important end. They choose rather to make a mystery of their religion, than impose it upon the world, like the Mahommedans, with the sword, or by means of the stake, after the manner of some pious Christians. Not all the authority of Akbar could prevail with the Brahmins to reveal the principles of their faith. He was therefore obliged to have recourse to artifice to obtain the information which he so much desired. The Emperor, for this purpose, concerted a plan with his Chief Secretary, Abul Fazil, to impose Feizi, then a boy, upon the Brahmins, in the character of a poor orphan of their tribe. Feizi being instructed in his part, was privately sent to Benares, the principal seat of learning among the Hindus. In that city the fraud was practised on a learned Brahmin, who received the boy into his house and educated him as his own son. When Feizi, after ten years' study, had acquired the Sanskrita language, and all the knowledge of which the learned of Benares were possessed, proper measures were taken by the Emperor to secure his safe return. Feizi, it seems, during his residence with his patron, the Brahmin, was smitten with the beauty of his only daughter; and indeed the ladies of the Brahmin race are the handsomest in Hindustan. The old Brahmin saw the mutual passion of the young pair with pleasure, and as he loved Feizi for his uncommon abilities, he offered him his daughter in marriage. Feizi, perplexed between love and gratitude, at length discovered himself to the good old man, fell down at his feet, and grasping his knees, solicited with tears forgiveness for the great crime he had committed against his indulgent benefactor. The Brahmin, struck dumb with astonishment, uttered not one word of reproach. He drew a dagger, which he always carried on his girdle, and prepared to plunge it in his own breast. Feizi seized his hand, and conjured him, that if yet any atonement could be made for the injury he had done him, he himself would swear to deny him nothing. The Brahmin, bursting into tears, told him, that if Feizi should grant him two requests, he would forgive him, and consent to live. Feizi, without any hesitation, consented, and the Brahmin's requests were, that he should never translate the Vedas, nor repeat the creed of the Hindus. How far Feizi was bound by his oath not to reveal the doctrine of the Vedas to Akbar, is uncertain; but that neither he, nor any other person, ever translated those books is a truth beyond any dispute., It is, however, well-known that the Emperor afterwards greatly favoured the Hindu faith, and gave much offence to zealous Mahommedans, by practising some Indian customs which they thought savoured of idolatry But the dispassionate part of

mankind have always allowed that Akbar was equally divested of all the follies of both the religious superstitions which prevailed among his subjects."*

It is said of him that he wanted to be converted into a Brahman and asked his witty minister Birbal to devise means for it. The latter did not flatly refuse to the Emperor's face but took his time, and when questioned his answer was significant, *viz.*, that he had found from experience that horse and ass produced mule, which was not worthy of estimation. When Akbar failed thus he resorted to other ways. It is evident that he made the proud Rajput princes, who prided themselves on being descended from the Solar or Lunar dynasties of ancient Kshatriya kings, agree to marry their daughter and sister to him or his son, though it was regarded as the greatest degradation and made them loose their caste. How it was preserved can well be imagined. Their ancestral history recorded in the Mahabharata must have been changed or destroyed as it would stand in their way. It was for this reason that the whole of the Ramayana and the parts of the Mahabharata which were interpolated, were translated.

During the Moghul rule in India some of the worst interpolations took place as the kings of India were forced to make inter-marriages with the Moghul family and in order to justify such alliances, the Yabans were described as the descendants of the Poru family in the great Epic. The great Moghul Emperor Akbar was responsible for it He was not tolerant in the beginning of his reign.

The mighty Emperor did everything to make himself the ruler of all India and master of all religions, which culminated in his being the founder of a religion and the Hindus paid him daily respect as a God and were made to believe that he was a Hindu Jogi in his previous life at Allahabad.

"Inside the palace are a Library, an Arsenal, and a Tosha-khana, or Treasure House. The library is rich in Sanskrit and Persian MSS., which certain skilful scribes were copying. It contains some marvellous illuminated scrolls, some ancient Kurans, and one special copy of the Gulistan, for which it would be almost justifiable to break the last Commandment. The book has been valued even by local bibliophiles at £50,000, but is beyond price for the purity of its script, and the splendid colour and delicacy of its pictures. Some one at Ulwur ought to reproduce these beautiful mediæval designs, as Dr. Hendley has popularised at Jeypore those of the Mahabharata, executed by order of Akbar the Great.' †

"A small gate to the west next brings you to the Chanda Mahal, or 'Silver House,' the heart and marvel of all this immense abode. Seven stories of such wild and lovely structure as you would expect to see only in dreams rise here one above the other in rose-red and snowy-white balconies, oriels, arches, pilasters, lattices, and domes—gay everywhere with frescoes and floral ornaments. In the lowest floor, which is kept—like the second and third—as a winter residence, we

* Alexander Dow's "History of Hindustan," pages 22—24.

† Professor Edwin Arnold's "India re-visited," pages 167-168.

are permitted to inspect a priceless volume, the abstract of the Mahabharata in Persian, made by the orders of Akbar the Great at a cost of forty thousand pounds, and illustrated in the most exquisite manner with coloured and gilded miniature pictures, all of an incredible delicacy."*

Jaipur Chiefs allege that they trace their descent from the family of Rama through Kusa and they preserve the copy of the translation of Akbar's Mahabharata and not of Vyasa or Vaisampayana and exhibit it to travellers. This will show how Akbar succeeded in inter-marrying with the daughters of Rajput princes and in making inter-relation from the time of Yadu's brother that Yaban descended from the line of Tarbasu. This is the way interpolations in the great Epic were introduced so late as the Moslem rule in India, and what had happened before will be better imagined than described. The rhapsodists in Bengal massacred the Indian Epics, converting them into mere poetry of imagination to tell upon the mad imagination of the mass, and Kritibas and Kasidas caught the infection and departed materially from the original texts of even the metamorphosed Epics.

It would have been well if the Indian Epics were revised and recovered. Critics are like whetstones, not able to cut themselves but making iron sharp and capable of cutting. The knowledge of men and women and their manners is the first principle and fountain-head of good writing. The object of poetry is to make the mind catch the precepts and divine love more easily and retain them. Tulsidas made the Ramayana popular in the North West Provinces and he is even now worshipped in a temple at. Benares. He was reputed to be a great devotee of Rama who brought to life a dead man by his power, and it is even now believed. Tulsidas followed the path of Ramanuja, who flourished in the Deccan and made a philosophy of his own, wrote a note on the Ramayana and proved that the Vedanta Sutra bore out his school of philosophy. His name, like Sankaracharjya, is associated with the Hindu revival in India and its stand against the Jain religion. Kabir, who was one of his famous disciples, later on had disciples among both Hindus and Moslems and he convinced them that with the religion of God the body had no connection but that it was the spirit of love which was the essence of religion. The performance of the last rites on his dead body is a well-known episode. The Hindus wanted to cremate the body according to Hindu rites and the Moslems wanted to do it according to their custom, but were astonished when they could not find the dead body when the sheet was opened.

Apart from the subsequent revisions of the Mahabharata, it is certain that the discourse between Sounaka and Souti did not belong to the

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* Professor Edwin Arnold's "India re-visited," pages 148-149.

period of Janmejoya or Parikshit. It belonged to the time of his son Satanika. Sounaka was the teacher of King Satanika. He was the author of Kalpasutra, and a vice-chancellor, as it were, of Naimashiya Aranyaka University and a descendant of the Bhrigu family who was reputed to be the propagator of the laws of Vishnu. Ugrasrava, son of Romaharsana, recited the Mahabharata with Harivamsa in the twelve years sacrifice before King Satanika, who was the performer of the twelve years sacrifice at the University of Naimashiya Aranya. Yajnavalkya, one of the revisers of the Mahabharata, is clearly mentioned in it. His Gotra was found among the Vasisthas.*

The learned Pargiter discusses the time of the Vaisampayana Mahabharata. He says that there were many Yajnavalkyas and care must be taken not to confuse them. Yajnavalkya, son of Brahmavaha, carried off the prize, defeating Sakalya at the court of Videha King.

"Now Vajin can be synonymous with Vajasani, the name of a Yajnavalkya; this Yajnavalkya was (either Vajasani o-) Vajasaneya; hence his disciples, the Vajasaneyas of the White Yajus, were called shortly Vajins; but Vajin was misunderstood as a 'horse' and so he is styled Asvarupa. (Vis, misunderstanding, makes the sun appear Asvarupa. Bhag copied). Similarly, Tittiri was apparently the chief of the disciples of the Black Yajus, (Weber, pp. 41, 87. 90-1.) Vis, misunderstanding, turned him and the other disciples into partridges; and so also Bhag. Tittiri was a name, and his followers were the Taittiriyas. This Yajnavalkya as Vaisampayana's disciple would have been prior to Janmejoya III, and his teaching appears to have been adopted by that king, for, it is said, Janmejoya established the Vajasaneyaka school in disregard of a Vaisampayana and in spite of his curse, but ultimately abdicated. (Mat. 50, 57-65. Va. 99, 250—6. This Vaisampayana can hardly have been Vyasa's disciple, chronologically. He may have been the Vaisampayana of the Mahabharata (i., 60, 2227 f.); but there he has been confused with Vyasa's disciple, and so Vyasa and the earlier Vaisampayana have been wrongly introduced).†

"Vaisampayana made 86 Samhitas 27, Vishnu) and all his disciples received them except Yajnavalkya, who was discarded because of his presumption..... The Taittiriya Brahmana shows that Aruna Aupavesi lived well before 800 B. C., and the synchronisms coupled with the date of the Bharata battle assign him to the early half of the ninth century B. C. Similarly the Jaiminiya shows that Yajnavalkya Vajasaneya lived well before 725, and his position in the table places him more than a century earlier."‡

The learned Max Muller in his well-known book, "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," has given important particulars about the time and the occasion of Ugrasrava's recital before Saunaka's twelve years sacrifice.

This Saunaka was the teacher of the king Satanika, son of Janmejoya. This Saunaka was the Vice-Chancellor of the forest University of Naimashiya where King Satanika performed the twelve years sacrifice and Romaharshana's son Ugrasrava recited the Mahabharata

*Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 237 Footnote.
†Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," pages 323-324.
‡Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," pages 331-332.

with Harivamsa. This Saunaka, like Sri Chaitanya, destroyed his own Sutra to make Asvalayana famous.

"There was one Sakha of Sakala, another of Bashkala; taking these two Samhitas, and the twenty-one Brahmanas, the Aitareyaka, and completing it with other 'Saunaka revered by numbers of great Rishis, composed the first Kalpa-sutra...... The story of Saunahotra, the son of Sunahotra, and grandson of Bharadvaja being born again as Gritsamada-Saunaka, may have some historical foundation, and the only way in which it can be interpreted, is, that the second Mandala, being originally seen by Gritsamada, of the family of Bhrigu, was afterwards preserved by Saunahotra, a descendant of Bharadvaja, of the race of Angiras, who entered the family of Bhrigu, took the name of Saunaka and added one hymn, the twelfth, in praise of Indra. This is partly confirmed by Katyayana's Anukramani, and by the Rishyanukramani of Saunaka. It would by no means follow that Saunaka was the author of the hymns of the second Mandala. The hymns of that Mandala belong to Gritsamada of the Bhrigu race. But Saunaka may have adopted that Mandala, and by adding one hymn, may have been said to have made it his own. Again, it does not concern us at present whether Saunaka, the author of the Kalpasutra, was the same as Saunaka, the chief of the sages in the Naimaishiya forest to whom, during the great twelve years' sacrifice, Ugrasravas related the Mahabharata, and who became the teacher of Satanika, the son of Janmejoya. If this identity could be established a most important link would be gained, connecting Saunaka and his literary activity with another period of Indian literature."*

The dramatic Mahabharata and Ramayana preach the great lesson of the ancient chivalry of India, that one ascends to heaven if one dies for the country and that death pursues a coward like Durjodhana, who flies from danger, and gives no quarter to the timid and unchivalrous, a youth who depends on others and cannot stand on his own legs. There are brave men like Bhisma and Drona who die in the front ranks and do not care for their old age.

Dr. Holtzman first propounded the great and novel theory that the traditional stock of legends was first worked up into its present shape by some Buddhist poets who showed a great predilection for the Kuru party. The early history of the Indian drama is lost in mystery, but nevertheless the sage Bharata is said to have been the author of the first drama in India and the name Mahabharata lends colour to it as a great drama. The term Bharata signifies originally an actor. It is quite possible that after the great war the incidents were dramatised and served the purpose of the chief amusement as well as teaching the lessons of religion at public places of entertainment. The man, the chief actor who dramatised the Epic, received the epithet Bharata. Dr. Keith says.

"Prakrit is what comes at once from nature, what all people without special instruction can easily understand and use."†

Asoka inscriptions were all written in Prakrit language. During the Buddhistic age Prakrit must have been the spoken tongue and

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* Professor Keith's "History of Sanskrit Literature," page 26.

† Professor Max Muller's Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pages 232-233.

Sânskrit dramas bear this out. The dramatic Epics belong to an agè prior to Asoka and Vikramaditya. Dr. Keith says:

"To Kalidasa are ascribed, without any plausibility, various strotras, including the Cyamaladandaka mainly in prose, the Sarasvati stotra and the Mangalastaka, which can be reconstructed from the Tibetan of the Tanjur."*

All these establish Tibetan influence in Indian literature The didactic tales in the Indian Epics aimed directly at edification rather than amusement, and the dramatic way of putting the subjects with interpolations and alterations of truths made them very attractive to the ignorant general public. Even the incidents of King Vikramaditya's life were spoilt in this way with all sorts of ghost stories and mad adventures and reflections on the customs, manners and religious beliefs of the age. The true incidents of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were thus traduced by the dramatist Buddhistic teachers of Tibet, who introduced their own customs and manners in the heroes and heroines of the Epic and made them their own property.

The heroine of the dramatic Mahabharata is Draupadi, but she is not even mentioned in the table of contents of the original Mahabharata, where only the names of Kunti and Gandhari are mentioned. This gives the clue to the said transformation of the original Mahabharata into the dramatic form in which the Mahabharata is now presented to the world. This reconstruction of the dramatic Mahabharata has been full of didactic fables of ancient kings. The beast fables too found a place in it with fairy tales. Didactic stories became a definite mode of instruction in India, and a separate book called Panchatantra grew out of the Mahabharata, giving the morals and maxims of practical life. It may be said, not without some justification, that the well-known beast † of fables in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana proves the doctrine of transmigration.

The Buddhist works illustrate the deeds and greatness of the divine Buddha and his contemporaries in past births. It may safely be said that the dramatic Epics belong to that age. It is true that in the Chandogya Upanishada there are allegories and satire of the day, talk of instructions by a bull, etc. (VII. 10.3) yet there was no question of transmigration. During the Buddhistic period there was ample proof of the literary inter-communication between Tibet, Nepal, Kashmir, Guzarat and Southern India in the respective literatures of the different countries. It might be said with some degree of confidence that the well-

* Professor Keith's "History of Sanskrit Literature" page 218.

† The tale of a mouse which became a tiger and was returned to its original state by the boon and curse of a hermit in the Mahabharata, and a Kulapati converted into a dog for vanity in the Ramayana; both are well-known.

known shrines of India must necessarily have been the places of the exploits of the great heroes, Avatars and literary prodigies of India. The Indian Epics were let alone for a considerable time and great poets like Kalidasa, Bhabhuti, Bharati, etc., embellished the different subjects of the Epics in their poems Sakuntala, Raghubansa, Kumarsumbhava, Uttaramcharita, Kiritarjun, Naisardha, etc. Besides all these, Ksemendra's Brihatakathamanjuri furnish how the Indian Epics played on the imagination of the Indian poets and authors.

"The tale is remarkable in its obvious blending of mythology involving Vedic and Epic beliefs, Buddhist legends, and popular story matter; but in Ksemendra's hands it suffers greatly from excessive condensation.*.. ...In Book XV we have a sort of duplication of this adventure; he marries Alamkaravati, and proceeds to an expedition to a White Island or Continent where he worships Narayana with an elaborate prayer written in the most finished Kavya style; the parallel to the famous episode of the Mahabharata in which sages seek the Svetadvipa and take part in the worship of a wonderful deity—which has been deemed a reference to actual experience of Nestorian rites or even of Alexandrian Christianity—is complete, and suggests very strongly that the Kashmirian or the original Brihatkatha borrowed the episode from the Epic as we know it."†

The kind of audience the two Indian Epics had can be easily imagined from the time of their composition. The Ramayana is a Kavya and not so difficult as the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata is the great Epic in India. It was meant for the highly cultured audiences in the University of Saunaka. The author or the reviser had no chance of winning reputation and wealth by anything that was commonplace, like the simple Ramayana.

There was a very great Tibetan influence in India during the Buddhistic period and the great Epic was transformed during the Tibetan rule. Lt. Col. Waddell contributed a valuable article on the Tibetan Invasion of India in 647 A.D. and the historian Vincent Smith said that Arjuna, the minister of Emperor Harsavardhana and the usurper of his throne, could not reign but was taken as a prisoner to China after his defeat.‡ Firistha records that the Persian invasions of India took place after the disappearance of Basudeva. That the incidents refer to Mousal Parva of the Mahabharata one can clearly see and the addition dates back to that time or after. Sri Krishna Vasudeva was a historical character.

It will be seen that the tradition of making the images of Jagannath etc., with the bones of Sri Krishna, Subhadra and Balarama and the building of the temple of Jagannath at Puri reconcile with the

* Professor Keith's "A History of Sanskrit Literature" page 277.

† Professor Keith's "A History of Sanskrit Literature" page 279.

‡ The Mahabharata, Bana Parva, page 367.

time. This was the memorial raised by the great Vasudev family or their adherents. The Mousal Parva of the Mahabharata gives a picture of the history of the Yadav family. Sri Krishna's exploits were recast and revised at the time of his descendants or devotees, who adopted such names as being auspicious. The history proves the time of revision and additions to the original Epic. It seems possible that the dramatic revision took place in Bengal during the Tibetan supremacy in India for the obvious reason that the drama Beni Samhara was written in Bengal by Bhattanarayana, who was brought from Kanouj and settled in Gour.

It is Tibetan influence which made Draupadi the wife of the five Pandavas and Kunti and Madhabi of four gods and kings, respectively. It is Tibetan influence which introduced the Rakshasas in the two Epics instead of Asuras. The beauties of Hill tribes, Apsaras and Gandharvas of Gandhar (Candahar) and Kashmir etc., were not left out of consideration to make the dramas attractive to the audience. The characters in the Indian Epics were not the puppets of the dramatist's imagination. They were all historical figures with their life stories altered to the type of a drama. They were to instruct or to portray, to divert or to amuse and they proved successful; so much so that they secured immortality in the minds of the Indian readers or audience.

They were more inclined to be of the psychological and philosophical order than of the narration or novel types. They could not be meticulously accurate or even plausible in every detail. In the interests of what is called realism the Epic revelations may prove interesting in that they were not carried to an absurd point of pedantry. Life and drama can never be the time table of the actual life of past history. The authors of the dramatic Epics succeeded in their main effort of diverting the lay public from the immediate surroundings of actual lives to their imaginations of a life of activity, of romance, which cast a spell on the unity of religious faith, cult and doctrine in ancient India.

EPIC AIM.

In love and obedience are the origin of the moral and spiritual world. Obedience was a virtue of the first importance in every religion. Yajati proved it by giving the throne to Puru for his obedience. His daughter Madhabi gave birth to four sons to four kings to save her father from the debt of hospitality to Galava. Galava in order to pay the tuition fee of Visvamitra, sought the help of king Yajati. The merit of this gift of Madhabi saved Yajati from falling from heaven. It was Madhabi who first refused to comply with the request of her father to marry someone by a Svayambara ceremony. She took to religious austerities as she realised the nothingness of earthly love by the enjoyment of four kings and their luxuries. The yearning of the soul and not of the mind must be satisfied and that is why real chastity of body is to be prized above all. Birds and beasts fight for their mates and sometimes die. In cultural society chastity of mind and soul is to be prized above all. The functions of the body require medical help and society cannot take any objection to it. In the practice and learning of discipline no pitfalls are taken into account.

Eternal punishment was not the law in early ancient India.

"Even if the most wicked worship me (God) with due concentration of mind, he too must be considered righteous for he rightly resolved and atoned his sins." (Gita, Chap. IX, verse 30).

Eve transgressed the law of God and for that not only did she suffer but her children shared the same fate—this ideal is not consistent with that of the Hindus. The example of Madhabi presents the custom that the chastity of a girl depends on her obedience to her parents and not to the observance of virtue. Woman was created for the propagation of the race, and that part of her work a woman was in duty bound to fulfil; in doing so if she was not at all stained with passion that was considered ideal. Proof of such chastity Madhabi gave when she refused to marry after obeying the command of her father and fulfilling the purpose of meeting the demand for a tuition fee of poor Galava and satisfying the passionate royal sage Visvamitra, the great preceptor of the day. She controlled her senses and concentrated on realising the divine love within the heart developed in the exercise of virtue. Her children did not fight but were all great men of India with whose accounts the Bharata Samhita deals.

The idea of sin is man's creation. The unbridled license of poets ranges from earth to heaven and pays little regard to the truth behind

ancient history. Evil disposition is sin. It is easier to do evil than good to others. The true disposition of the soul within is to do good to others. The dying English hero is remembered for offering to a dying soldier, a glass of water presented to him, saying "Thy necessity is greater than mine." This is virtue practised for its own sake which the ancient Hindus valued more than anything. Man and woman are born to assist one another and if they meet in the same spirit as the chaste Madhabi did, there can be no sin or carnality. If she had married by Svyambara then she would have been guilty of committing sin.

Heavenly genius springs more quickly than poets can discover. Genius is a more precious gift of heaven above than the riches that kings bestow on poets to sing their praises. Light service charms light minds, and it is for this the ancient ideal of chastity which Madhabi represents in the days of Yajati is hard to realise by ordinary man. It was the great conception of Vyasa along with the example of king Sudarsana and Uddalaka, offering their wives to guests as a paramount duty to prove to the world that they were men of self-control and that passion and envy could not overcome them. Those who envy, like Milton's Satan, pine in disgrace and come down from heaven, but those who are envied thrive in prosperity and rule in heaven. Sudarsana went to heaven for this, conquering death. Envy is death. The account of him opens first in the Anusasana Parva of the Mahabharata. Evil habits soil a fine dress one puts on to make one look beautiful more than mud and dust; but good deeds set off a lowly garb or any calumny thrown upon it.

Ancient India presents to the world as examples of the cleansing of the sins of the body and mind such names of illustrious Indians as Ahalya, Draupadi, Tara, Kunti and Mandadori. It is true, night covers all blemishes and every flaw is forgiven, but ancient India believed in confessing what is concealed by the darkness of night. Ahalya, the wife of the great sage Gautama, was the Indian Lucretia. The custom or law of a country is not universal and that cannot be the standard of virtue or vice. If one vanquishes one's own bad inclinations and is not overcome by them, then one enjoys real happiness and he or she may really be called chaste. The good disposition and conduct of man and woman are conditions precedent to chastity and virtue, for it proves that one refrains from doing wrong when one has the power to do so.

Epic literature owes its origin to the evolution or revolution of the Indo-Aryan social, moral, philosophical and religious institutions. It was then considered a necessity for establishing goodwill and peace on a

religious and moral basis amongst all classes so that they might come under the grand conception of a nationality of greater India in the conception of universal love of God and humanity. The historical and geographical traditions of ancient literature, philosophical and theosophical theories, and the founders of the royal houses of India are thus closely connected with the Epic. A study of the history of ancient civilisation from various aspects since its origin is as instructive as it is important to get at the root of the plot the Epic demonstrates. The Hindu Purans have five aspects—firstly, as history of general creation; secondly, as history of special creations; thirdly, as histories of families; fourthly, as histories of different ages; and fifthly, as accounts of great men. The Epics of India are not Puranas. The Puranas were the productions of various writers to propound their special dogmas and doctrines.

The Vedas, full of hymns of worship to the presiding deities of Nature or Natural phenomena, the Upanishads, full of reasoning and knowledge, and the philosophies with the ideal form of God in Narayana, failed to inspire the world with true feelings of religion, of peace and enlightenment. The inspired ancient sages, with a view to preserve harmony in the ancient religion of India, produced a new literature showing the four stages of human life analogous to the four seasons of the year: Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. Spring brings life and feeling, Summer playful gaiety and enjoyment, Autumn is the time for depositing eggs and Winter the time for fading and cold. Human life is a succession of literature and utility. The Veda, Upanishad and Philosophy of ancient India failed to produce an united nation, but rather led to the creation of conflicting interests and sectarian strife.

The story of re-generation of the Kshatriya race is given in Chapter L, Shanti Parva, after the cruel extermination of Parasurama, which describes how the children of the different royal houses were saved and gives the relationship of the Bhrigu family to the royal sage Visvamitra. It was the great sage Kasyapa who saved the Kshatriya race from being defiled by Sudras and Vaisyas and stopped anarchy on earth. It was he who installed them on their fathers' thrones, exiling Parasurama out of India, in the same fashion as Bali, the great Asura, was dethroned from heaven by Bamana (the dwarf) incarnation of the God Vishnu. This chapter has reference to the Poulama Parva and it begins with the family account of Jahnu, the royal Vedic sage, who was contemporary with Bhagiratha and was the god-father of the river Ganges. Nor is this all. In the second chapter of the Adi Parva the reciter, Sauti, was said to have been returning from the bloody but holy place of Samanta Panchak, the five lakes of the blood of Kshatriya carnage, and with

those bloody waters the fiery Parasurama offered oblation to the manes of his ancestors where the Kurus and Pandavas fought their fateful bloody battle. Necessarily the chapter in question is of very great historical importance and translations of the portions which refer to those kings of India are given here below :—

"Jahnu had a son named Rajas. Rajas had a son named Valakashwa. King Valakashwa had a pious son named Kushika. Kushika's son was known by the name of Gadhi. Gadhi had a daughter, O king, by the name of Satyavati. The powerful Gadhi married her to Richika, a descendant of Bhrigu. Satyavati gave birth to a son in Bhrigu's race who was devoted to penances and peaceful occupations, viz :—Jamadagni of regulated vows. Kushika's son Gadhi begot a son named Vishwamitra. Possessed of every attribute of a Brahmana, that son though a Kshatriya by birth was equal to a Brahmana. Richika (thus) begot Jamadagni. that sea of penances. Jamadagni begot a son of dreadful deeds. The foremost of men, that son mastered all the sciences, including that of arms. Like a burning fire, that son was Rama, the exterminator of the Kshatriyas. Having satisfied Mahadeva on the Mountains of Gandhamadana, he begged from that deity for weapons, especially the axe of fierce power in his hands. For that peerless axe of fiery splendour and irresistible sharpness, he became unequalled on Earth. Meanwhile the powerful son of Kritavirjya, the king of the Haihayas, endued with great power, highly pious, and possessed of a thousand arms through the favour of (the great Rishi) Dattatreya, having conquered in battle, by the strength of his own arms the entire Earth with her mountains and seven islands, became a very powerful sovereign and (at last) gave away the Earth to the Brahmanas in a horse sacrifice.

"The powerful Arjuna, however, of great prowess, always devoted to peace, ever obedient to Brahmanas and ready to protect all classes, and charitable and brave, O Bharata, did not think of that curse imprecated on him by that great Rishi. His powerful sons, always proud and cruel, on account of that curse, became the indirect cause of his death. The princes, O foremost of Bharata's race, caught and brought away the calf of Jamadagni's Homa cow, against the knowledge of Kartavirjya, the king of the Haihayas For this reason a dispute took place between the great Jamadagni and the Haihayas. The powerful Rama, the son of Jamadagni, filled with anger, cut off the arms of Arjuna and brought back, O king, his father's calf which was grazing within the inner apartments of the king's mansion. Then the foolish sons of Arjuna, going in a body to the hermitage of the great Jamadagni, cut with their lances, O King, the head of that Rishi from off his trunk while the celebrated Rama had gone out for fetching sacred fuel and grass. Worked up with anger at the death of his father and filled with vengeance, Rama vowed to rid the Earth of Kshatriyas and took up arms. Then that foremost of the Bhrigus, endued with great energy, displaying his prowess, quickly killed all the sons and grandsons of Kartaviryja. Killing thousands of Haihayas in anger, the descendant of Bhrigu, O king, covered the Earth with blood. Highly energetic, he speedily freed the Earth of all Kshatriyas. Filled then with pity, he retired into the woods.

"Afterwards, after the expiry of some thousands of years, the powerful Rama, who was angry by nature, was accused of cowardice. The grandson of Vishwamitra and son of Raiviya possessed of great ascetic merit, named Paravasu, O king, began to accuse Rama publicly, saying,—' O Rama, were not those pious men, *viz.*, Pratardhana and others, who were assembled at a sacrifice at the time of Yayati's death Kshatriyas by birth? You are not truthful, O Rama! You simply brag before people. For fear of Kshatriya heroes you have betaken yourself to the mountains.' Hearing

these words of Paravasu, the descendant of Bhrigu, once more took up arms and once more covered the Earth with hundreds of Kshatriya bodies. Those Kshatriyas, however, O king, counting by hundreds, that were not killed by Rama, multiplied (in time) and became powerful monarchs on Earth. Rama once more killed them quickly, not sparing even the very children, O king. The Earth again was covered with the bodies of Kshatriya children of premature birth. As soon as Kshatriya children were born, Rama killed them. Some Kshatriya ladies, however, succeeded in hiding their children from Rama.......

"Then Sudras and Vaishyas began wilfully to defile the wives of Brahmanas. When anarchy begins on Earth the weak are oppressed by the strong, and no man is master of his own possessions. Unprotected duly by the virtuous Kshatriyas, and oppressed by the wicked for that disorder, the Earth quickly sank to the lowest depths. Seeing the Earth sinking from fear, the great Kasyapa held her on his lap; and because the great Rishi held her on his lap (uru) therefore is the Earth known by the name of Urvi. The goddess Earth, for securing protection, pleased Kasyapa and begged of him a king. The Earth said; 'There are, O Rishi, some leading Kshatri as concealed by me among women. They were born in the family of the Haihayas. Let them, O sage, protect me. There is another person of Puru's family, *viz.*, Viduratha's son, O powerful one, who has been brought up among bears in the Rikshavat mountains. Another, *viz.*, the son of Sudasa, has been protected, through pity, by the highly energetic Parashara ever engaged in sacrifices. Though born in the family of a twice-born one, yet like a Shudra he does everything for that Rishi and has, therefore, been named servant of all work. Shivi's energetic son Gopati, has been brought up in the forest among kine. Let him, O sage, protect me. Pratradhana's highly powerful son named Vatsa has been brought up among calves in a cow-pen. Let that Kshatriya protect me. Dadhivahana's grandson and Diviratha's son was kept hidden on the banks of Ganga by the sage Gautama. His name is Vrihadratha. Possessed of great energy and endued with numerous accomplishments, that blessed prince has been protected by wolves and the mountains of Griddhrakuta. Many Kshatriyas of the race of Marutta have been protected. Equally energetic like the lord of Maruts, they have been brought up by the Ocean. These children of the Kshatriyas have been heard of as housing in different places. They are residing with artizans and goldsmiths. If they protect me I shall then remain unmoved. Their fathers and grandfathers have been killed for my sake by the highly powerful Rama. It is my duty, O great sage, to see that their funeral rites are properly performed. I do not desire that I should be protected by my present kings. Do you, O sage, quickly make such arrangements that I may remain (as before)'.

'Vasudeva said;—Then, finding out those energetic Kshatriyas whom the goddess had named, the sage Kasyapa installed them duly as kings. Those Kshatriya races that are now in existence are the offsprings of those princes."*

The story of Aurva proves how Kshatriya tradition becomes a Brahmanical fable in the Poulama Parva of the Mahabharata. The learned Pargiter has said so in his book and made full references to it. "Aurva might be treated as meaning 'born from the thigh' (Uru) and also belonging to the earth (Urvi). These names and ideas developed a fable."† He dealt with the Bhargavas in a separate chapter and clearly

*Professor M. N. Dutt's Mahabharata (English Translation) Shanti Parva, Chapter L, pages 67—70, Slokas 3, 6-7, 29—37, 44—62 and 68—85.

†Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradtion" page. 68.

found out that Jamadagni lived on the Ganges bank* and fled from fear of the Haihayas and allied himself by marriage with a junior royal family of the kings of Oudh. His son was the famous Parasurama who killed his mother Renuka and waged war against the Kshatriya race. His account of the incident is as follows:—

"The Bhrigus or Bhargavas were priests to king Krtavirya (of the Haihayas) and he bestowed great wealth on them. After his death the princes of his family demanded it back, but the Bhargavas refused to give it up. They used violence to the Bhargavas, and the Bhargavas fled to other countries for safety. One of the Bhargava wives gave birth to a son then who was called Aurva. The other account says (Mbh. xiii, 56, 2905-7) in prophetic form—The Kshatriyas fell out with the Bhargavas and slew them, and Bhargava Urva (Urva is also mentioned, Hv. 46, 2527 pad. v, 38,74) was born then. His son was Rcika. .. "These Aurvas lived in Madhyadesa, where they had fled and married, (Jamadagni lived on the Ganges bank, pad vi, 258, 21. Bd iii, 26, 4-3; 45, 1-5 say on the R. Narmada, a late Brahmanical tale probably,) and the Haihaya king Arjuna Kartavirya is said in his conquests there to have molested Jamadagni. There was hostility, and Arjuna's sons killed Jamadagni. Rama in revenge killed Arjuna and also, it is said, many Haihayas. The Haihayas pursued their devastating raids through N. India, until Sagara annihilated their power. The Brahmans confused all these occurrences in the fable that Rama destroyed all Kshatriyas off the earth twenty-one times. Consequently he is often styled the exterminator of the Kshatriyas. But tradition, while apparently accepting that fable, redressed the honour of the Kshatrivas by two anachronistic fables, that Rama challenged Rama of Ayodhya to fight and was defeated, and that he had a long contest with Bhisma also and was worsted. It is fabled that Rama, after exterminating the Kshatriyas, sacrificed at Ramatirtha with Kasyapa as his Upadhyaya and gave him the earth (or a golden altar) as his fee: whereupon Kasyapa banished him to the southern ocean, and the ocean made the Surparaka country (near Bombay) for Rama, and Rama dwelt there. Other stories say Rama retired then to Mt. Mahendra, which is generally identified with the Mahendra range in Orissa: and he is fabled to have lived on there till long ages later. He is also fictitiously introduced into tales about later princes. The next Bhargava Rishi mentioned is the Aurva, who succoured Sagara of Ayodhya and whose name was Agni. He is the last Aurva alluded to."†

It is apparent that the Brahmanas did not like to mention fully the disgraceful acts so well-known except by a mere reference under a garbled allusion. There are no less than 18 Bhargava hymn makers mentioned as Venyu Pithi in Rig Veda x 148. 5. and amongst them appear the names of Saunaka and Srtotisena. The Uttarakanda Ramayana mentions Pracetasa Bhargava (93 and 99 cantos, 16118 verses 25). The learned Pargiter says that

"the Ramayana is highly Brahmanical and its stories fanciful and absurd." ‡

He is of opinion that

"Vedic literature is not authoritative in historical matters (except where it notices contemporary matters), and conclusions drawn from it are not criteria for

*Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 197.

† Do. do. do. do. pages 197—200.

‡ Do. do. do. do. page 74.

estimating the results yielded by historical tradition in the Epics and Puranas. These results must be judged independently on their own merits."* "The epic" he says, "itself implies that the Purana preceded it. It says that Vyasa, just after he had composed it, declared that he had already made the Itihasas and Puranas manifest.†"

The genius of Vyasa and Valmiki, the great descendants of the two great sages Vasistha and Bhrigu, first conceived the idea of Epic literature—it was not a comment on the ancient literature but altogether a new thing of its kind. Life was then found to consist of some progressive stages of growth and usefulness like the annual seasons. As regards the human race, it was found convenient to use the analogous series of changes and states that take place one after the other, *viz.*, growth, maturity and death, in such a way as would excite gratitude and admiration at the kindness of the great Creator in creating the human, animal, insect and plant kingdoms on a plan of such wise mutual co-operation, relation of male and females, friendship and unselfish love and devotion. This was found to be the real basis of the true religion in going into the all important question of creation and the Creator of the universe with which the Vedic, Upanishadic, philosophic and moral ages of India were concerned.

Laws were found necessary for all kings, priests, sages, princes, and the general public, male and female The time of nursing, tutelage, discipline, restraint and practice has been graduated in the scale of human existence as imperative duties The Indian Epics present the two opposite sides of the true picture of life in human society, showing the influences which cluster round the years of childhood and youth, attracting some to religion and piety and some to lust and dissipation. There is no other example of the stages of life more appealing than those of endurance of gratuitous suffering which might have been spared because such suffering paints before the world in graphic colours the wanton and wicked addition to the sum total of human misery due to mere want of feeling in others, their obduracy, vanity, stupidity, cupidity, malice and caprice. God and Satan are painted in the contending heroes of the Indian Epics. They are demi gods of Avatars, but Sri Krishna is something higher and nobler than all these.

The inspired writers seem to have been particularly fond of him, representing as he does the purity of Divine Love in contrast with the interested love of a husband and wife. The salutary and enlivening effects of light and shade upon heavenly and earthly love in the visible

* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 14.

† Adi Mahabharata, 1, 54—64. Cf. viii, 34, 1498, page 22.

creation contribute in a large measure to a lively illustration of the infinite goodness, knowledge and power of God. His eye penetrates through all the secret recesses of the human heart and nature and examines the motive of every action of a man or a woman. Such pictures of opposite examples of restraint and indulgence are bound to operate upon the stage of the world in making one watchful over the effects of the thoughts and considerations of one's heart upon another.

Light and darkness are questions of Day and Night, but to a blind man day and night make no difference. He cannot see the glories of the universe, the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the beauties of Nature and creation. What light is in mundane existence, love is in the spiritual domain. The majestic and marvellous light of love is reflected in Sri Krishna, before whose splendour all created luminaries of Ancient India were lost in the great field of the religious battle of Kurukshettra. The father of the Kurus, Dhritarastra, who is said to be blind with selfish love and ambition of making his sons regale themselves in wealth and enjoyment, is lost in misery and agony of grief and Yudhisthira survived the frail body. Neither the shadow of death nor the gloom of the grave could overtake it. He is installed on the throne of truth with visions of eternity.

Other heroes of the great Epic pale into insignificance before the great ideal Yudhisthira. The Avatars of Pouranic gods disappear before the universal love of Sri Krishna, the essence of heavenly sanctity. The world is not so much concerned with the material body of God Sri Krishna or in questions of flesh and blood as in the nature of heavenly love. Questions of morality cannot arise in the matter of spiritual discussions. A man whose understanding has been regularly trained and exercised in the art of thinking will be able to employ his natural powers more properly than he could otherwise have done. The mind, like the body, requires to be trained before it can use its powers quickly, easily and advantageously. Logic is the art of thinking well. Nothing in this great creation can impress the mind so much as the miracles of wisdom and its excellence. Many are proud of their person, dress, power or fame. They study nothing but appearance. But religion alone will teach the principles, manners and means of shining in the world.

Man is a creature of circumstance and every literature is a necessity as it too is a creature of circumstance. Indian Epic literature was essentially so and was the product of necessity. After the extirpation of the Kshatriyas (kings) who fled in all directions and went into hiding to avert destruction by Parasurama, they were nowhere to be found and society and the country were fast approaching chaos and

anarchy for want of the Kshatriya kings, whose prowess and sternness had hitherto served as the cementing material to keep the various warring elements of society in concord and to promote the peace and prosperity of the country. Deprived of the protection and patronage of the kings, religion too was on the wane and the Brahmana came to be discredited. To rescue the country and society from such a sad predicament it became necessary to regenerate the Kshatriyas and to increase their numerical strength. But the Kshatriyas were dead and only a very few of them were lying concealed here and there. To shoot life into the dry bones of the Kshatriya race and to regenerate and reorganize society, the idea of the Epics was conceived. Vyasa's raising one hundred Kshatriya sons for ' andhari by his word of blessing and his raising the Kshatriya kings Pandu, Dhritarastra and Bidur by procreation, are perhaps nothing but allegorical for the raising and renegration of the Kshatriya race by his Epic, the Mahabharata.

The object of the Epics was to infuse life into society and the country by holding up to them glorious examples of kings, priests and people of the past and thereby urging their imitation. The Epics further strove to encourage the Kshatriya kings by showing up the new race of Kshatriyas as more virile and heroic than its predecessors, as is clear from the story of the conqueror Rama's defeat at the hands of his sons, Lava and Kusha, and that of conqueror Arjuna's defeat at the hands of his son, Babrubahana The Indian Epics describe the rearing up of Kshatriya princes in the hermitages of ancient sages. Valmiki, the great author of the Ramayana, was said to have sheltered and reared Lava and Kusha and the great Epic speaks of Drupada and Drona being similarly brought up. Drupada's close friendship with Drona and their subsequent rupture may be said to be the root of all troubles in the great Epic.

"Friends, once they fall out, become the bitterest enemies." (Shakespeare). Their early friendship was turned into enmity, which was the cause of the Great War. The fight between them and Drupada's defeat and division of the Panchala kingdom made Drupada think of revenge and recovery of his lost kingdom. The sacrifice performed for the purpose blessed king Drupada with two sons: Dristadyumna and Sikhandi, and a daughter, Draupadi. They were the real destroyers of the Kuru families, and their friends and allies were their great commanders-in-chief, and warriors, Bhisma, Drona, Karna and Salya in the famous field of Kurukshettra.

There is a very great similarity in the conception and aim of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, *viz.*, vice may rise for a time but

ultimate success crowns the head of virtue. This gave rise to the special name of 'Jaya' for the Indian Epics as distinct from Purana, and the very first invocation verse alludes to it. The inspiration of poets of Ancient India eclipsed the authors of the Vedic hymns, Upanishads, Brahmanas, Sutas, Puranas, and institutes of the Hindus. Indian tradition connects the king of Indian poets and dramatists, Kalidasa, with inspiration and blessings from the goddess of learning, Saraswati.

"Bhisma said :—Pleased with their penances and adoration, Narayana ordered the goddess of speech, *viz.*, Saraswati, to enter into the bodies of those Rishis. The goddess, for the behoof of the worlds, did what she was ordered. On account of the entrance of the goddess of speech into their bodies, those Rishis, well conversant with penances, succeeded in composing that foremost of works in respect of words, sense and reason. Having composed that work sanctified with the syllable OM, the Rishis first of all read it to Narayana, who heard them from kindness.*"

The Epic invocation verse mentions her name beginning with the 'OM'. Sri Krishna is said to have been the first introducer of the worship of the goddess Saraswati in the Puranas. Not only Vyasa and Valmiki drew their inspirations from her but their preceptors also did the same, as the great Epic distinctly mentions. The great reviser of the great Epic, Yajnavalkya, revised the works of Vyasa and Vaisampayana and mentioned the name of Saraswati, the fountain of knowledge and instruction.

The chief object of the Epics has been to recite in graphic manner the majestic glory of power and energy reflected in the thousand hands of Kartavirya-arjuna or the hydra-headed Ravana crushed to pieces by the power of virtue represented in the forlorn men and beasts like Parasurama, Rama Sugriba and Hanumana The Purana theory of God's appearance in fish, tortoise, boar and dwarf was improved upon in the Epics. What Rama failed to achieve, Sri Krishna did conspicuously. It is for this that the Ramayana stands as it was whereas the Mahabharata has gone on increasing from time to time.

The Ramayana is not, strictly speaking, an Epic from the Hindu point of view. The first six books are distinctly called a poem describing the tragic death of Ravana and Book VII, known as Uttarakanda, is more in the nature of a Purana dealing with the Deva and Asura fight and forecasting what would happen in the future. The Indian Epics give greater prominence to the enemies of humanity to show the still greater power of virtue, which vanquished them eventually. Meagre beasts like the boar, tortoise, man-lion and dwarf killed powerful demons like Hiranakshya and Hiranyakasipu, humiliated the powerful Bali, and the Bharata Samhita likewise testifies to the powers of Agastya, Vasistha, and Bhrigu, in subduing and killing.

*The Mahabharata Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXXXVI, verses 35—37, page 537.

Batapi and Illval, Britta and Kalkeyas and the beautiful Tillottama in the case of Sunda and Upasunda. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata did the same thing beautifully in the real poetry of actual life and society, declaring to the world that ultimate success in life depends more upon virtuous intention and action than on the power of body and flesh, the quantity and quality of powerful combinations. Sri Krishna is identified and hall-marked with success in the great Epic even in the mouths of Karna and Sanjoya, whereas the great Rama was not so in the Ramayana. There lies the difference between the two great literatures of the advanced and cultured people of India.

Both Vyasa and Valmiki describe the continual fight of the senses in the internal body of men and the outside world. The very first inspiration verse of Valmiki speaks of it. Time is the great hunter of the creative passion of the animal kingdom and Valmiki warns the world of fleeting time, the destroyer of the life of enjoyments and passion, vanity and pomp. Rama was the great hunter who killed the great Ravana, steeped in sensual enjoyment, who was trying to enjoy the beautiful Sita and was killed in the attempt in the midst of grandeur and opulence. Besides, the ancient cruel passion for hunting was denounced in due manner in both the Epics in Dasarath's and Pandu's deaths by curses.

It is strange that Western scholars like Professor Macdonell have indulged in an erroneous view that Dasaratha was poisoned by his wife Kaikeyi. It is a great pity that he failed to see the object of the author. Dasaratha and Pandu were victims of carnal appetite and had more than one wife. Kaikeyi and Kousalya, Kunti and Madri were mentioned to depict the two aspects of the passion of love in the material world. Kaikeyi and Madri were for pleasure, enjoyment and ambition of life, whereas Kousalya and Kunti were for peace and maintenance of the glory of their husbands. Dasaratha was placed on the horns of a dilemma. He had promised two boons to his wife Kaikeyi for saving his life in a battle and Kaikeyi had reserved to the future the naming of the boons. When Dasaratha declared that Rama would be installed king, Kaikeyi asked for the boons, that her son Bharata should be king and Rama should be exiled.

The boons asked for by Kaikeyi standing in the way of the fulfilment of the king's declaration at the last moment, and Dasaratha being unable to bear the catastrophe of granting the said boons, the two dutiful sons Rama and Bharata saved their father from moral and spiritual obligations to his wife and son. Rama went into exile to fulfil the pledge of his father and Bharata refused to sit on the throne and offered the kingdom to Rama, going to him personally, and on

Rama refusing it, took Rama's permission to place his sandals on the throne fallen vacant by the death of their father Dasaratha and to reign as Rama's regent. The two dutiful sons saved their father by fulfilling his promise, by making Rama the king by proxy, and Dasaratha's extracted promise of making Bharata king in his actual reigning as a regent and thus led him to heaven by their piety and devotion.

" High fate is his, the sire of two
Most virtuous sons, so brave and true :
With wonder and with joy intense
Our ears have heard their conference.
* * * * *
' The moon his beauty may forego,
The cold forsake the Hills of Snow,
And Ocean o'er his banks may sweep,
But I my father's word will keep.
Now whether love of thee or greed
Thy mother led to plan the deed,
Forth from thy breast the memory throw,
And filial love and reverence show.'
Thus spake Kausalya's son: again
Bharat replied in humble strain
To him who matched the sun in might
And lovely as the young moon's light :
'Put, noble brother, I entreat,
These sandals on thy blessed feet :
These, lord of men, with gold-bedecked,
The realm and people will protect.
Then Rama, as his brother prayed
Beneath his feet the sandals laid,
And these with fond affection gave
To Bharata's hand, the good and brave.
Then Bharat bowed his reverent head
And thus again to Rama said :
' Through fourteen seasons will I wear
The hermit's dress and matted hair :
With fruit and roots my life sustain,
And still beyond the realm remain,
Longing for thee to come again.
The rule and all affairs of state
I to these shoes will delegate.
And if, O tamer of thy foes,
When fourteen years have reached their close."*

To a dramatist it is worthwhile to sacrifice such a life of enjoyment which made such a dutiful son as Rama go into exile for his indiscretion. Rama abstained from taking any help from his father's kingdom or from any human being in his great war against Ravana,

* Professor Ralph T. H. Griffith's "The Ramayan of Valmiki" translated into English verse. Canto CXII, pages 221-222. Book II.

beyond utilising the powerful apes and monkeys of the forest as instruments and accessories of war, lest it might be construed as participating in the kingdom of his father or exercising his influence as an heir-apparent to the throne of the powerful suzerainty of Ayodhya.

The great Epic allots the penalty of senility to Yajati, fall to Nahusa and Mahavisa and that of death to Pandu and Parikshit for the cruel passion of hunting and the animal passion of marrying more than one wife. Nahusa and Mahavisa were punished for the criminal offence of casting wistful eyes on others' wives. The king Parikshit was saved in the womb of his mother to die in his hunting expedition by the curse of the son of a mute sage engaged in religious austerities for his injudicious action in placing a dead serpent on the mute sage's neck out of vanity. It was an age when the vanity of Asvathama and Parikshit was crushed. Vanity was denounced from the days of Yajati and the great Epic says that his fall from Heaven was ascribed to it. He was saved by his four grandsons by his daughter Madhabi.* One can realise the divine love of the Almighty Father, if one is blessed with children. It is for this the ancient sages of renunciation found out their mistakes and declared that the gate of heaven is opened by the children, and a son's name Putra is derived therefrom in the Sanskrit language. Domestic life is good. The great Epic author Vyasa advised Yudhisthira to reign instead of to retire.

"Vyasa said:—'The words of Arjuna, O amiable Yudhisthira, are true. The highest religion as sanctioned by the Scriptures, consists in the duties of a house-holder. You are acquainted with all duties. Do you then duly practise the duties prescribed for you (viz., the duties of a house-holder). A life of retirement in the forest forgetting the duties of a house-holder has not been laid down for you. The gods, Pitris, guests, and servants all depend (for their maintenance) upon a house-holder. Do you then support all these, O king. Birds and animals and various other creatures, O king, are supported by house-holders. He, therefore, who belongs to that mode of life, is superior to all. The life of a house-holder is the most difficult of all the four modes of life. Do you practice that mode of life then, O Partha, which is difficult of being practised by persons of uncontrolled senses. You have mastered all the Vedas. You have earned great ascetic merit. You should, therefore, bear like an ox the burden of your ancestral kingdom. Penances, sacrifices, forgiveness, learning, mendicancy, restraint of senses, contemplation, living in solitude, contentment, and knowledge of Brahma, should, O king, be practised by Brahmanas to the best of their ability for the attainment of success.

I shall now tell you the duties of Kshatriyas. They are not unknown to you. Sacrifice, learning, activity, ambition, holding the rod of chastisement, dreadfulness, protection of subjects, knowledge of the Vedas, practice of all kinds of penances, good conduct, acquisition of wealth, and gifts to deserving persons, these, O king, when performed properly by the Kshatriyas, secure for them both this world and the next, as heard by us. Of them, O son of Kunti, wielding the rod of chastisement has been declared to be the foremost. A Kshatriya must

* The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter XC.

always have strength, and upon strength depends chastisement. Those I have mentioned are, O king, the principle duties for Kshatriyas and lead greatly to their success. Brihaspati, in this matter, sang this verse:—Like a snake devouring a mouse, the Earth devours a king who is inclined to peace and a Brahmana who is greatly addicted to a life of domesticity! It is heard again that the royal sage Sudyumna, only by wielding the rod of chastisement, gained the highest success, like Daksha himself, the son of Prachetas."*

The great Epic's chief aim has been to regenerate the two important sections of the Indo-Aryan community, the kings and priests, fighting for vanity and power. Domestic life is the royal road to heaven. Yajati, the great Epic king, enlightened his grandsons about the seven gates of heaven, which were Asceticism, Modesty, Simplicity, Kindness, Peace of mind, Self-control and Gifts.† King Sibi, son of Ushinara, was the most famous amongst kings for his wonderful hospitality and gifts and was the foremost of the four grandsons of Yajati.‡ The great Epic describes the bounden duties of a house-holder, a king, a priest of India and their mutual relationship, as well as the duties of parents and their children, and husband and wife. Without domestic life the control of the senses by abstraction of mind in silence was not found very effective. The peace and prosperity of an empire depends on the good feeling between a king and his priest and the discourse between Aila Pururaba, the Nestor of Indian kings, and Kasyapa, the father of the priesthood in India, speaks for itself.

"Kasyapa said:—For a division between Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, numberless griefs assail the people. Knowing this, a king should appoint a Brahmana priest having experience and wide knowledge....... The Brahmana contributes to the advancement of the Kshatriya, and the Kshatriya to that of the Brahmana. Brahmana should, therefore, be especially and always adored by kings.§

"Bhisma said:—It is said that the preservation and advancement of the kingdom depend upon the king. The preservation and advancement of the king depend upon the king's priest. That kingdom truly enjoys felicity where the invisible fears of the subjects are removed by the Brahmana and all visible ones are suppressed by the king with the strength of his arm." ‖

Kasyapa's greatest service in the cause of humanity was his curbing of the powers of Parasurama, which entitled him to the priesthood of the Bharata kings of the Kshatriya race. A descendant of Kasyapa was said to have been run over by the car of a wealthy Vaisya and the latter was not punished by the king Indra. Indra in the guise of a jackal read him the great lecture on the vanity of Brahmans like him as follows:—

"Bhisma said:—They who are born under an auspicious constellation on an auspicious lunation and at an auspicious hour, try their best for performing sacrifices,

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* The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter XXIII, verses 2-15, pages 26-27.

† Adi Parva, Chapter XC, verse 22.

‡ Adi Parva, Chapter XCIII,

§ Shanti Parva, Chapter LXXIII, verses 28 and 32, page 110.

‖ The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter LXXIV, verses 1 and 2, page 110.

practising charity, and procreating children, and wishing to pass their time cheerfully in those acts, at last acquire very great happiness. They, on the other hand, who are born under evil stars, inauspicious lunations and at evil hours, cannot perform sacrifices and get progeny and at last fall into the Asura order. In my previous birth I had much useless learning. I always tried to find out reasons and had very little faith. I used to censure the Vedas. I was unacquainted with the fourfold objects of life, and was devoted to the science of reaping which is based upon ocular or tangible proofs. I used to speak of reasons only. Indeed, in assemblies, I always spoke of reasons. I used to speak irreverently of the injunctions of the Shrutis and address Brahmanas haughtily. I was an atheist, a sceptic, and though really ignorant, proud of my learning. This birth of a jackal that I have got in this life is the outcome, O twice-born one, of those sins of mine."

"Thus addressed, the ascetic Kasyapa, rising up, said:—'O, you are surely endued with great knowledge and intelligence! I really wonder at all this.' With eye whose vision was extended by knowledge, the Brahmana then saw that being who had addressed him as Indra, the king of the gods and the lord of Shachi*".

It also speaks of the great power and prosperity of the Vaisyas (Shanti Parva, Chapter 180) in ancient India.

Hospitality, from the days of ancient Indo-Aryan civilisation, was considered to be the highest virtue, and the idea of expiation of sins by sacrifice and gifts was in vogue from post-Vedic days. The births of the great prince Bharata, son of Sakuntala and Dushmanta, Vyasa and Karna are said to be the fruits of the principles of hospitality pushed to the extreme. The legend of Karna being the half-brother of the Pandavas might have originated from the fact that the mother of Karna and that of the Pandavas were perhaps two different bodies bearing the same name, *viz.*, Kunti, which may be responsible for the dramatic interpolation. It served the purpose of a Suta dramatist to utilise the name to make Kunti mother of the Pandavas as well as of Karna.

In the story of Sudarsana and his wife Oghabati in the Annusasana Parva it is clearly held that hospitality is the gate of heaven, more than chastity as it is now understood The gift of Madhavi to Galaba by her father Yajati bears this out. The birth of Vyasa is ascribed to such over-stretched sense of hospitality and the birth of Suta Karna might be so with his mother Kunti, a different Kunti to the mother of the Pandavas. It is said Vena's death was another epoch-making event. Prithu was raised by the Brahmanas and from Prithu Sutas, Maghadas and Nishadas were born. They were all connected with the Epic. The inspiration verse of Valmiki and the story of the king Uparichara begin with the humane idea of religion of non cruelty in the religion of sacrifice. The abandonment of the snake sacrifice of Parikshit, the Rakshas sacrifice of Parasara, marks the distinct age of mercy and charity to enemies as a requisite virtue of an ancient king.

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* The Mahabbharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CLXXX, verses 45—49 and 52-58, pages 271-272.

The incumbent duties of a house-holder were defined in the five sacrifices of daily life, of religion and social service. The story of Uddalaka says that even a wife if she was not in menses had to satisfy a guest with her person. Her husband could not object to it and king Sudarsana, by virtue of such hospitality, went to Heaven in person, but his wife was represented as being turned into a river for her objections to it on the earth below. Madhavi refused to marry after giving birth to four distinguished men of India and it was hospitality to a pigeon which induced king Sibi to give the flesh of his own body to Virtue, which appeared before him in the guise of a hawk or falcon. Shakespeare says:—

> " My master is of churlish disposition
> And little recks to find the way to Heaven
> By doing deeds of hospitality " "(As You Like It "
> * * * * Act II, Scene IV.)
> " In former ages courteous ladies were
> Who worshipp'd virtue, and not worldly gear."

Gandhari, Kunti and Draupadi presented the material, moral and spiritual aspects of the great question of union between Woman (Prakriti) and Man (Purusha) with which the creation of the human world is so closely concerned.

It could never have been the aim of the Epic to uphold conflict for the possession of the earth, power, person, caste, custom, law, rule and religion, which cannot but be selfish. It was a drama acted before the watching universe on a stage not bounded by the high mountain ranges of the Vindhya or Himalayas. It was a conflict not decided by the strategy, strength and learning of Bhisma, Drona, Kripa, Karna or Arjuna, Satyaki, Dhristadyumna, but by the piety of Yudisthira and Draupadi, praying in the midst of their great sorrow and calumny, torn from the heart of their kingdom in the deceitful play of a game of dice, scorned by the silent countenances of their own near and dear relatives and looking upon Heaven in the supreme embodiment of wretchedness in the forlorn forests. They suffered the shame and humilation of an exiled emperor and disgraced empress. They gave ample proofs of endurance, of what human brain, blood, bone and flesh were capable of bearing, and with unmistakable clarity they defined their positions as a man and a woman in the creation of God that love was the be-all and end-all of the existence of the soul within and the soul without and that was represented in their faithful ally, guide and relation, Sri Krishna, whose real force was reflected in the heroism of Arjuna and the strength of Bhima to kill the enemies of flesh and blood to which human frailty was heir. That was the real civilisation of the soul and love of which India was so proud.

The great author of the Mahabharata depicts the history of civilisation, not of the body and clothes but of the soul and heart, and it is therefore only just that those who want to hide their sin like to expose others by making them nude. But they failed utterly in their attempt to do so. They were themselves ridiculed. There is a proverb that those who commit a nuisance in the open road have no shame, but those who witness it, feel ashamed and cover their eyes. It is of that nature. Drunkards beat and abuse the men who try to help them out of the drain. The reformers were abused with all sorts of things and they are even described as being of low birth and origin. The great men are not fairly treated for their discovery of the truth. It is the way of the world, the work of illusion.

Men in those days believed that those who died to free the country and the nation from the tyrant's hand went to Heaven, so they died contented as they sacrificed their lives for the love and liberty of their motherland. Ancient Indians regarded mother and motherland above everything and they looked upon them as higher than even Heaven itself. The great Epic Mahabharata has said so times out of number. It has passed into a proverb that they would on no account leave their motherland but would rather gladly give up their own lives for it. This intensified the hatred and made the fight bitter, cruel and bloody. It was for this reason that the war descriptions in the Epic were so extensive. Besides, in the heroic age people liked to be imbued with martial spirit by reading the. heroic exploits of heroes on the fields of war.

The different Parvas of war accounts grew to such an enormous size, containing within their scope the kernel of the Epic, that each particular country interested in the exploits of its own hero only read the Parva connected with him and they were interested only in it. Each of these war parts, amplified in time, became a miniature Mahabharata in itself, and thus the Mahabharata grew to such a tremendous size. These war parts were full of exaggerations and were of very late origin and naturally contained contradictory and spurious statements of all kinds to display the glory of the heroes of each province they referred to. There was no check to restrain their authors from departing from the truth. The true account of the war is given in the Asvamedha Parva by Krishna. He was the beau-ideal of godhead at the end and what he told his father about the war could not but be true. If anyone wants to read anything about the ancient civilisation of India he must read the Bana, Udyoga, Asvamedha and Annusasana Parvas.

There were different customs and manners in different parts of India, but they were all nationalised by matrimonial alliances and conquests, by Rajasuya sacrifices and Dvigbijoya excursions, *i.e.*, testing of the valour of kings and the talents, learning and capacity of princes who succeeded to their fathers' thrones either by bringing to their knees the enemies who had encroached on their forefathers' provinces or by claiming suzerainty over all. This was the aim and ambition of the ancient princes of India which made wars so constant and numerous. The marriage ceremony was performed with a test of strength and valour. It was considered more honourable to snatch a girl away by victory in a fight than to win her by love and courtship. It was thus the source of many lifelong, struggles between near and dear relatives. The girls were highly educated and aristocratic. They knew how to drive a war chariot in the field and could fight. The princesses Kakey' and Subhadra actually did so and saved the lives of their husbands on the battlefields. Mothers were proud of the heroic deaths of their children. They urged their sons to fight and to recover lost kingdoms or to increase and extend their own dominions. This was the age of the Epic of India.

The original scource from which the Indian Epics grew is the Bharata Samhita. It is stated in the Mahabharata that the famous sage Agastya performed a twelve year sacrifice. The Mahabharata aims at the undoing of the animal sacrifice, and it is for this that it is distinctly said that it begins with the episode of the King Basuhoma Uparichara of Magadha, who took up the cause of animal sacrifice and was cursed. He soon became a follower of the new cult of Narayana worship and performed a sacrifice with barley corn and sesamum etc., instead of animals and went to Heaven through the grace of Narayana. Yajnavalkya undid the work of his uncle Vaisampayana. Yajnavalkya was the author of the Satapatha Brahman and White Yajurveda, and the Mahabharata was made on the basis of a fusion between Samkhya and Yoga philosophy. Yajnavalkya was a follower of Patanjala, the author of the Yoga system of philosophy. Yajnavalkya was the high priest of the King of Mithila Janaka, who was found to be the questioner instead of King Janmejoya. Nor is this all. The questions of King Yudhisthira, Arjuna and Dhritarastra were answered by Bhisma, Krishna and Sanjaya, respectively. In all these editions of the Mahabharata the aim cannot be the same.

Materialism has always been an attractive form of philosophy, but the countless evidences of design and purpose strung in different manners round natural phenomena throughout the universe are stronger and brighter proofs against such materialism. The characteristics of the

great Creator are reflected in the changing weather, the seasons, the variety of creations, in the contrast of day and night, life and death, love and enmity. There is a sort of mystery behind the great design. No one is wise at all times. Man learns very little from his own experience but much from that of others. The trinity of the Creator is believed by many religions in the body, soul and spirit of His creation. It is not a question of autocracy in religion or the power of priest, philosopher, or king.

The Indian Epics were not originally concerned with materialism. All other animals live together except man. Man is naturally fond of novelty. Man to assist man is to be a god; this is the path to eternal glory. Mind is the leader and director of mankind; when it aims at glory by a virtuous life, it is sufficiently powerful, efficient and noble. It stands in no need of fortune, since it can neither give nor take away integrity, industry nor other praiseworthy qualities. Personal beauty, great riches and strength of body, or the skill of a great warrior, pass away before the noble productions of mind reflected in Rama and Yudhisthira, in whom the soul and the spirit work together. Neither army nor treasures are the bulwarks of an empire, but in a true friend like Bidur and Sri Krishna, whom one can neither command by force nor purchase with gold but whose help can only be secured by good conduct and faith, lies success in the battle of life.

It is sheer folly to hope for safety in the forlorn island of Ceylon or in the abyss of Dvaipayana lake, for one cannot avoid the terrors high fortune places within us. Terror closes the ears of the mind when the guilty are overwhelmed at their own acts. The golden palaces and vast empires of Ravana and Durjodhana were burnt and broken, and death and defeat were theirs. Tyrants have given themselves up to mean deceit, false chivalry, mad luxury and boon-giving worship. In battle the greatest cowards are in the greatest danger, for cunning and boldness are their defences. All things in battle turn out well by patient watching, prompt activity on every opportunity and good counsel, with which the God-like Sri Krishna favoured the Pandavas in the great battle.

To effect a speedy end tyrants found friends and mighty soldiers. The Kurus were elated with all sorts of vows of their great generals like Bhisma, Drona and Karna. They found delight in bloodshed. They were all moved by the brave spirit and ready to face death. To die without fear of death is to be desired, but parents could not have prayed for such deaths as that with which Bhisma's father was alleged to have been identified. They would rather pray that their children

should lead upright, honourable lives like the Pandavas. The great Sri Krishna preached the great lesson to the blind king Dhritarastra openly in his great peace mission in the Kuru Court, which summarised reads like this:

The wicked believe that fortune rules in all things. The virtuous and the wicked are equally anxious for glory, honour and command, but the former try to be crowned with success by honourable means while the latter are dependent upon deceitful games and treachery. No one has ever won glory or empire by foul means. Everyone is the artificer of his own fortune. All who deliberate on matters of importance ought to be influenced by feelings of hatred, friendship, anger or compassion. Those who are not known in the world, if they commit anything through any impulse of passion, few can come to know of it; but those who are in an exalted position of life, their deeds are known to all men. It is for this that the liberty of a king depends upon his good name more than upon his riches or the success of his arms. A king is circumscribed and enjoys very little freedom of action. A king has to prefer the good of his country to that of his children. To be able to endure odiums is the first art to be learnt by those who aspire to power, and the Pandavas have given ample proof of this. Nobody becomes guilty by fate. War is waged by a king to give protection to all and especially to the aggrieved party, and not for aggrandising wealth for the luxury of worthless princes like Durjodhana, Dussashana and his friends. He who boasts his descent, praises what belongs to another who went before him long ago. Riches and good birth are not meant to veil the real state of things. Death puts an end to all human ills of life, but thousands die in the battlefield to put a termination to all the ills of mankind.

The wars with which the Indian Epics are concerned were such. They were not mere fights between the Kurus and the Panchalas or the Pandavas for the possession of lost kingdoms. The lower animal depends only on the power of the body, but a true man alone relies not on the frail and fleeting glory derived from riches and power, but from the endowments of mind with which the heroes and heroines of the Indian Epics were endowed. There are ample evidences that the Indian Epics were revised many times, but they have not departed from the original aim materially. The man who can be forced to act against his own will knows not how to die; this alone is what the poet preaches in the deaths of Bhisma and Drona. Gold is tried in the fire and misery tries great men. To bestow a favour hoping to receive another is a contemptible and base usury with which Durjodhana, Karna Bhisma and Drona are found to be identified. A benefit does

not consist in what is done or given, but is seen in the true motive of the donor and doer. He who desires more is really poor and not the man who has little. Other men's sins are before a king's eyes, but his own should not be behind his back. When such is the case that king is blind. A great mind is a great fortune and not material wealth and prosperity.

The kingdom of God is not the gift of another but must be won by culture of head and heart. It was not a question of Vedic Sacrifices under different cults and priesthoods, or the boon of Gods, or the development of knowledge under different systems of philosophy, but it was a question of divine love to uplift the moral and spiritual welfare of man or woman as well as that of the general public coming in contact with him or her.

The illustrious examples of Rama and Sita, Yudhisthira and Draupadi, bear testimony to this. The material world is the creation of Maya and with it the births of Maya Sita and Draupadi from one of the five elements of creation are connected. The fire of passion is responsible for the animal creation. The earth receives everyone at birth and Nature supplies all the necessities of life and sustenance. The created beings live, move and die and are converted into the five elements. It is not possible to determine whether nature or mother earth is a kind parent or a hard stepmother of a man or a woman in the vale of tears, but it is true that when he or she discerns the eye of the great Master of the Universe all pain and misery disappear.

Śri Krishna is not an incarnation of any God or virtue but is the great Master of divine love. Sita and Draupadi tried Rama and Yudhisthira with ideal earthly love but could not influence them. The thousands of princesses of India and the loving damsels of Brindaban were enamoured of the divine love of Sri Krishna and the great hero Arjuna was converted to Sri Krishna's creed of love.

This is the great lesson the Indian Epics preach :—

" My mind to me a kingdom is
Such perfect joy therein I find,
As far exceeds all earthly bliss
That God and Nature hath assigned
Though much I want that most would have
Yet still my mind forbids to crave "

ANCIENT HINDU MARRIAGE SYSTEM.

In very early times, ordeal was a manner of trial practised in the belief of an actual interposition of God to free the innocent and condemn the guilty. 'Waters of Jealousy' mentioned in the Book of Numbers (V. 24) was such a trial and was called the *Judicium Dei*, or judgment of God. This was a sort of trial to test the incontinence of Hebrew girls. It was followed in ancient Greece.* Grotius gives many instances of water ordeal in Bithynia, Sardinia, etc. Fire and water ordeals were found common in Europe in the middle ages and in India as well. The fire ordeal of Sita and water ordeal of Radha are well-known incidents. Marriage is a social as well as a religious ordeal of Ancient India in which man and woman were united by their parents and friends to pass through home-life comfortably, establishing good society and aiding the advance of civilisation. Through Savitri's good conduct her husband Satyaban was brought back to life by the boon of Pluto and her father-in-law got his lost sight and kingdom.

Hindu marriage is a form of union to render social, moral and religious service to humanity. The bond of Hindu marriage was conceived by the ancient sages as a sort of institution where men and women were joined to overcome and refine the earthly dross, sordid desires and human frailties. Students brought up in the hermitages of their preceptors were tried with all sorts of inducements and opportunities. The wives and daughters of the preceptors were actively engaged to try the students before they were allowed to live with them and admitted into the circle called Gotra of their preceptors. The great Epic illustrates this by the examples of Bipul, Utamka, etc. Marriage with the Hindus is not an union to propagate a race but a form of charity, a test of birth, knowledge, accomplishment, truth, fortitude, chivalry, and wisdom. Princess Lopamudra became the wife of Agastya, Devajani, daughter of Sukra, whom Kacha, son of Brihaspati, had refused was found fit for a Kshatriya prince Yajati. Marriage is a question of culture and refinement and not a question of satisfying the urge of nature, companionship, friendship or love.

One of the greatest dramatists of the world, Shakespeare, says:—

"But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd
Than that which, withering on the virgin-thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness."

* Beeton's Dictionary of Universal Information, page 423.

And another :—

"Speak it not lightly! 'tis a holy thing,
A bond enduring thro' long distant years,
When joy o'er thine above is hovering;
Or when thine eye is wet with bitterest tears,
Recorded by an angel's pinions high,
And must be questioned in eternity.
Speak it not lightly! though the young and gay
Are thronging round thee now w.th tones of mirth;
Let not the holy promise of to-day
Fade like the clouds that with the morn have birth,
But ever bright and sacred may it be,
Stored in the treasure-cell of memory.
Life will not prove all sunshine; there will come
Dark hours for all. O, will ye, when the night
Of sorrow gathers thickly round your home,
Love as ye did when calm and bright
Seemed the sure path ye trod, untouched by care,
And deemed the future like the present, fair?
Should fortune frown on your defenceless head,
Should storms o'ertake your bark on life's dark sea,
Fierce tempests rend the sail so gaily spread,
When Hope her syren strain sang joyously,
Will ye look up though clouds your sky o'ercast,
And say, together we will bide the blast?
Speak it not lightly! oh! beware, beware!
'Tis no vain promise, no unmeaning word;
Lo! men and angels list the faith ye swear,
And by the High and Holy One 'tis heard.
O, then kneel humbly at His altar now,
And pray for strength to keep the marriage vow."*

(From *The Cottager and Artisan.*)

Kalidas, the greatest of Indian poets and dramatists, has presented to the world the different aspects and forms of marriage in the examples of Uma, the ideal wife of Siva, Rati of Cupid in the Kumarsambhava, Indumati in the Raghuvamsa and Sakuntala in the well-known and inimitable drama, but Draupadi was the masterpiece of Vyasa in his great Epic which played more upon the Indian imagination than the heroine of Valmiki or Bhababhuti, Sita or any other model hitherto known. The ideal princess Draupadi was said to have been married to five Pandavas, a thing unknown or unheard of in any history or Epic of the world. To realise the extraordinary beauty of such a conception one has to study the growth and development of marriage in the ancient history of civilisation in India. Draupadi's marriage is a question of divine love and emancipation and is not a question of earthly love and marriage.

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* Professor Henry Southgate's "Noble Thoughts in Noble Language," page 334.

The scenes and beauties of Nature have a great and inexplicable charm for the uncultivated primitive man, beasts, birds, etc. The objects of the material world afford food and drink; pleasure and enjoyment are the effects of creation and are the attributes of mind. There is a sort of chord in the human mind which responds to the call of nature in the mystic love of the majestic Creator. It plays upon the heart and appeals to the head about divinity. Here lies the connecting link between love and religion resulting in final emancipation. The sun in the cheerfulness of the morning glow, the stern dazzling beam of noon and mild tenderness of evening sadness: the soothing moon dazzling in the starry firmament; wind and water glistening and flowing with joy, are all messages of animation of their great Creator unknown to the discerning human intelligence. They represent the face of Heaven alone and the gay majestic landscape below of tempestuous ocean, murmuring rivers, still lakes alive with warbling birds, humming bees, roaring beasts on the brim of the lofty mountain peaks, arid deserts, flowery woods, green fields of corn or grass, represent the four or five elements of nature. Natural beauty and divine glory smile upon animal creation.

It is human knowledge, science, philosophy and religion that disclose the hand of the great Creator, the Almighty Father. The great concentration of the Ancient Indian sages blessed them with divine sight to gauge the law, foresight, truth and justice of Heavenly creation. To establish universal love in the society of men by controlling passion, selfishness and envy, the Hindu marriage institution came into being and developed.

The law as it applies to the affections becomes the law of society. The good and the vile seek their respective companions according to different tastes and inclinations. This has always suggested to man the sublime creed that the world is not the product of manifold power, but of one will of one Mind and that one Mind is reflected everywhere in the great universe. The Hindu creation believes in five elements and the Samkhya philosophic creation ascribes everything to Prakriti and Purusha. Draupadi is represented as Prakriti and the five Pandavas are the five elements of Purusha. Prakriti is like cold, which is the privation of heat. A man seeks good ends and his strength lies in the whole strength of Nature. Justice, power, love and temperance proceed out of the same spirit of one Purusha differently named as Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakul and Sahadeb. The perception of this law of laws in the power of auxiliaries awakens in the mind a sentiment which one can call religion, and makes one's greatest happiness the possession of Nature, Prakriti or Draupadi.

Wonderful is the power to charm and command. The universal love ascending to divinity is represented in the marriage of Draupadi. The red-breasted robin of love sings the sentiments of virtue, the embalmer of the world, to charm and command the Pandavas in their reign of justice and love. It made the sky and hills sublime and the silent song of stars heard in the divine love of Draupadi in the exile life of the Pandavas. All the sweets of domestic life or ideas of the glories of Heaven cannot make one happy unless the heart is cleansed from its pollution in the fountain-head of a heart which is opened for sin and uncleanness. Man ascribes all blame to outward circumstances and his imagination is ever busy in sketching such things as will make him happy, forgetting, alas, that the vessel of the heart is tainted, thus spoiling the wine of earthly comfort. The little head of robin Draupadi was a perpetual spring of joy which outward circumstances could not influence. The notes of the robin salute the Pandavas at every turn. If the weather be bright the bird is on the topmost branch of a tree, and if rain be descending it is under the shade of a leaf, and no change can put a period to its song of comfort.

Draupadi may be described in an adaptation of the well-known lines of the poet Thomson :—

> "Eyes all the smiling family askance,
> And pecks, and starts, and wonders where she is:
> Till more familiar grown, the table-crumbs
> Attract her slender feet."

If the pleasures of recreation, though innocent, are forbidden by the maxims of public morality, then they are liable to become poison fountains. Murder will speak from stone walls; the least admixture of a lie will speak for itself. All attempts to make a good impression or favourable appearance generally vitiates the effect. Soul first knows itself the sentiment of virtue in the union of marriage of the soul within and the soul without. This was the marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas in the philosophic conception of truth and union of Atma and Paramatma, the secret law of emancipation. The divine love which Draupadi radiated around her and the highly cultured personality that she represented, placed her character on such a high pedestal of fame and public estimation that even the declaration of her marriage with the five Pandavas could not in the least detract from her spiritual and moral loftiness of charactèr or lower her in the least in public estimation. The more lofty a character is, the more it is proof against public or private obloquies.

Sayings and acts, which in the case of ordinary people would evoke ridicule or reproach, were, in the cases of Socrates, Diogenes or Christ,

considered models of wisdom and manliness. Similar was the case with the noble and chaste Draupadi. The fact that the declaration of her having five husbands could not in the least influence public opinion against her, shows how very noble, chaste, moral and highly cultured she was in her time. It is very regrettable and a strange irony of fate that great Western scholars have sought to find in it a handle against her and to ridicule the glorious and reputed ancient Hindu society and civilisation. Western scholars have thought the Mahabharata to be a glorification of the Kurus, and it is in the fitness of things that the profligate Kuru princes and their friends like Karna too found grounds to insult Draupadi publicly for being a consenting party to the political declaration that she was the wife of the five Pandavas when she was really the wife of Yudhisthira alone.

Marriage is the most important relation of life. It is the sanctioned and regulated mode of connection which the innate and instinctive tendencies of human beings desire with the opposite sex. There was no such thing as marriage in the beginning of creation in Hindu mythology. Human creation, it is said, was made by the fiat of the Creator, but when it was found that men so born renounced the world, the Creator thought women necessary for perpetuation of the human race by propagation. Illusion was then represented by woman as an important part of creation. Union between male and female became the essential question of creation, not only in animals but even in plants. In primitive societies there was at first clan life. and when the importance of the female grew, family life came into vogue. Marriage was a later development essential for the regulation of society and decency, the stepping stone of civilisation.

The question of civilisation arises, more or less. with the marriage ceremony. Eventually love became the fruit of marriage. For love without marriage is like a bird of passage which seats itself upon the mast of a ship which itself moves along. Fools gather round a great beauty in a party of Svyambara just like wasps about a fruit girl. Marriage makes the tree of love grow and gives fruit, making its roots deep-seated and allowing birds to build their nests therein and affording shelter to travellers. No joy in nature is so sublimely pure as that of the affectionate mother at the good fortune of her children. In domestic life heavy cares are heaped on the wife, who forgets herself and lives for others. She learns to serve her time to suit her fate. The hours of night are to her the same as those of the day. She learns to govern in the domain which belongs to her in the house. Her love teaches the husband to realise his duty and service to her children.

To blow is not to play on the flute; one must know how to move the fingers to bring out the notes of harmony to make life enjoyable, so that peace may reign in the heart of the household. The highest fortune of union is what remedies the shortcomings and compensates the failings of male and female. The first foundation of human society is marriage and it was a sort of schooling and education, if not partnership of life. Grief and joy, when shared, give greater relief and pleasure than when one alone is left to them.

Marriage was eventually regarded as a religious ceremony of the highest importance, not only to propagate the human race but as having a direct bearing on the place in the next world. Marriage is defined as an act, ceremony or process by which mutual relationship is established. For in course of time angels of Heaven appear in children to illumine the unselfish love of the Heavenly Father which is planted in the breasts of earthly parents.

It is evident from Hindu mythology that during the Vedic period the institution of marriage had come to be definitely crystallized.

"In the Rig Veda Urvasi sojurns with Pururavas for four years, the two lovers in the Visnu-Purnana spend 61000 years in pleasure and delight."*

Mitra and Varuna in a marvellous manner beget the famous sages Vasistha and Agastya. It is necessary to present a portion of the verses of the Rig Veda bearing on the point, as well as quotations from 'Pancavimsa Brahmana':—

"First Soma accepts thee; then Gandharva accepts thee; Agni is thy third lord; the son of man is the fourth to accept thee. (40)." "Soma bestowed this maiden to Gandharva, Gandharva gave her to Agni. Agni has given her to me with wealth and progeny. (41)." "O bridegroom and bride! Do ye remain here together; do not be separated. Enjoy food of various kinds; remain in your own home, and enjoy happiness in company of your children and grandchildren. (42).' "The bride and bridegroom say, May Prajapati bestow on us children; may Aryaman keep us united till old age.' (Address to the bride), O bride! Enter with auspicious signs to the home of thy husband. Do good to our male servants and our female servants, and to our cattle. (43)" "Be thy eyes free from anger; minister to the happiness of thy husband; do good to our cattle. May thy mind be cheerful; and may thy beauty be bright. Be the mother of heroic sons, and be devoted to the gods. Do good to our male servants and our female servants, and to our cattle. (44)" "O Indra make this woman fortunate and the mother of worthy sons. Let ten sons be born of her, so that there may be eleven men (in the family) with the husband. (45)" "(Address to the bride), May thou have influence over thy father-in-law and over thy mother-in-law, and be as a queen over thy sister-in-law and brother-in-law. (46)" "(The bridegroom and bride say), May all the gods unite our hearts; may Matarisvan and Dhatri and the goddess of speech unite us together. (47)" (X 85). Rig Veda."

In the Atharva Veda the marriage sukta of the Rig Veda is found with certain important changes. The gift of the bride rests with her

* Dr. Winternitz "A History of Indian Literature," page 530.

father. The gift of cows and blankets for securing long life and progeny to the couple was introduced. The consummation mantras are included. The hymns of the Atharva Veda, containing as it does, mostly spells and incantations, appealed to the ignorant and soon became very popular. The incantations, medicines, and injunction of gifts to alleviate the distress and misery of the world must have been appealing to the instincts of the people. Blessings were invoked for the Arya and Sudra equally. The Brahmans were oppressed by the kings (V. 19) and the gospel of truth was preached that kings and nations where Brahmanas were oppressed do not prosper (V. 9-6); cows were specially prized and gifts of cows were revered and praised over all others (XII. 4). The Kshatriyas and Vaisyas were mentioned and Indra was invoked to make them prosperous.

With the growth of society and ideas of convenience, morality and religion, it is surmised that promiscuity naturally came to be regarded with disfavour. Free intercourse before marriage might have been the custom in the pre-Vedic period, but that too came to be considered as reprehensible and must have disappeared. Parasara was said to have asked for the hand of Satyabati but the guardian refused. It is clearly mentioned in the Epic. Besides, it is inconceivable that Vyasa could be guilty of proclaiming to the world the misconduct of his father or mother in the way it is described there, so it cannot but be an interpolation by the enemies of Vyasa.

It might be said with great emphasis that a similar attempt was made by the enemies of the Pandavas and the friends of the Kurus revising the Epic describing the Pandavas and Draupadi as their common wife, which was wholly unorthodox and revolting to the ideas of ancient Hindu civilisation. Proofs are not wanting. The marriage of king Parikshit with the princess of the king of Munduka is mentioned in the Mahabharata in the Bana Parva, Chapter CXCII. This is very interesting, for king Ayusha told his daughter to be faithful and cursed her for her previous misconduct. That seems to be one of the first marriages among the kings of the Solar line. The relevant portion is quoted here below from the translation:—

"Markendeya said:—A king of Ajodhya, born in Ikshaku's dynasty, named Parikshit, (once) went out hunting. Pursuing a deer alone on a single horse he went away to a great distance (from his followers and retinue). Fatigued and afflicted with hunger and thirst, he saw in that part of the country where he was (thus) led, a dark and dense forest. He entered it (the forest). Seeing in the deep forest a charming lake, he with his horse bathed there. Thus being refreshed and placing some lotus-stalks before the horse (for him to eat), he sat on the side of the lake. Lying down there he heard a sweet strain of music.

Hearing it he reflected, 'I do not see any trace of any human being here: whose strain of music is then this?' He then saw a damsel of great beauty and grace gathering flowers and singing (as she was doing it). She soon came near the king. To her said he, 'O blessed lady, who are you and to whom do you belong?' She replied, 'I am a maiden.' The king said, 'I ask you to be mine.' To him replied the maiden, 'Give me a pledge,— only then I can be yours.' The king asked about the pledge and the maiden said, 'I must never see water.' The king said, 'Be it so' and he then married her. Having married her, the king Parikshit sported with her in great joy and sat with her in silence. When he was thus living, his soldiers arrived at that spot. Seeing the king the soldiers stood surrounding him. Cheered by the arrival of his soldiers, the king entered a palankin and went to his city. Arriving at his own city, he lived with her in privacy. Even those who were stationed near him could not see him. Thereupon his chief minister asked those women that waited upon him, 'What is your business?' The women said,—'We see here a matchlessly beautiful damsel and the king has married her giving her a pledge, namely that he would never show her any water.' Having heard all this, he (the minister) made an artificial forest containing many trees with numerous fruits and flowers. He excavated a large and deep tank within that forest in one of its corners. He covered it with a net of pearls, and its water looked like ambrosia. One day he spoke thus to the king in private. 'This is a beautiful forest having no water anywhere. Sport here in joy.' At these words of the minister, he (the king) entered that forest with his beautiful wife. One day when he was sporting in that charming forest, he became tired and fatigued and afflicted with hunger and thirst. He then saw a bower of Madhavi (creeper). Entering it with his beloved, the king saw a tank full of water which was transparent and which was as sweet as nectar. Seeing it with his beautiful wife, he sat down on its bank. Then the king thus spoke to that lady, 'Cheerfully bathe in this water.' Having heard his words, she got down under the water, but she did not re-appear again. When the king searched for her, he did not find any trace of her. He then ordered the water of the tank to be pumped out. He thereupon saw a frog sitting at the mouth of a hole. On seeing this, the king passed the following order in anger. 'Kill all frogs wherever they are to be found. Whoever wishes to see me, let him come to me with a dead frog as tribute.' When this fearful destruction of frogs went on, the frightened frogs went to their king and told him all that had happened. Thereupon the king of the frogs, assuming the garb of an ascetic Brahmana, came to that monarch and thus spoke to him. 'O king, do not allow anger to take possession of you. Be kind, you should not destroy the innocent frogs.' Two Slokas here follow:— O Undeteriorating one, do not destroy the frogs. Pacify your wrath. The prosperity and ascetic merit of those that have their souls steeped in ignorance always suffer diminution. Pledge yourself not to be angry with the frogs. What need have you to commit such a sin? What purpose will be served by killing the frogs?' To him the king, whose heart was full of grief for the disappearance of his dear one thus spoke. 'I will never forgive the frogs. I will certainly destroy them. My beloved wife has been devoured by one of those wicked wretches. The frogs therefore will always deserve to be killed by me. O learned man, you shall not intercede on their behalf.' Having heard his words, he (the frog king) thus spoke with his senses and mind much pained, 'O king, be kind. I am the king of the frogs, named Ayusha. She was my daughter, named Sushabhana. This is but an instance of her bad character. She had deceived many other kings before. Then the king said, 'I desire to have her. Let her be given to me by you." Thereupon her father bestowed her upon him and he spoke to her thus, 'Wait upon this king.' Having said this, he thus cursed his daughter in anger,

"As you have deceived many kings, for your this untruthful conduct, your sons will be haters of Brahmanas."*

It seems significant that the kings and priests did not think well of connections between uncivilised people, like Mundakas, and that connection between civilised royal families and kings of India were found necessary for the advancement of civilisation and peace.

It might have been that Parikshit's kingdom of Ajodhya was named from Ayusha, who bestowed his daughter on Parikshit in marriage and was thus instrumental in the propagation of the Ikshaku line of kings of Ajodhya. Earth is called Prithivi from the fact of her first being the wife of (*i.e.*, enjoyed by) king Prithu; a field is named after the person who first clears it of the jungle, and a game belongs to him who wins it first.

With the development of society and civic life, marriage became regulated by laws and religious canons. From Vedic times to the times of the Indian Epics eight forms of marriage were in vogue. The Hindu form of marriage has never been a *contra socia, i.e.*, a social contract, as in Western countries, but has always been a religious sacrament. The Vedas provided mantras and formulae for solemnizing marriage and the institutes of Manu promulgated the laws and rules regulating marriage. The eight forms of marriage are

"the Brahma, Daiva, A'rsha, Prajapatya, A'sura, Gandharva, Rakshasa and Pais'acha. The six forms (of marriage) commencing with the first one (Brahma) are proper for Brahmanas; the four forms counted from the end (Pais'acha) are not sinful for Kshatriyas, and the same set, excepting that of Rakshasa, shall be regarded as proper for Vais'yas, and S'udras."†

The Brahmana form and the Arsha form of marriage have come down to the present time. There was also another kind of marriage, *viz.*, Svayambara marriage, but that was hardly a separate form of marriage. It was only a ceremony and a mode of choosing the bridegroom, the actual marriage which followed the ceremony being held in the Brahmana form.

Under Vedic ordinances, the essential ceremonies for a marriage are: firstly, the bestowal of the girl by her parent or guardian on the bridegroom by invocations of the gods and the deities; secondly, the performance of the Yajna with fire in which the Fire-God is made a witness to the bestowal and the gift of the bride; and thirdly, the *Saptapadigaman* (literally, going seven steps), in which the bride goes seven steps following closely and literally at the heels of the bridegroom and this last ceremony completes the marriage and makes it irrevocable. After this *Saptapadigaman*, the girl belongs to the husband and her

* English Translation of the Mahabharata, Chapter CXCII, Bana Parva, page 286 verses 3—35.
† Manu Samhita, Chapter III, verses 21 and 23, page 84.

father or former guardian ceases to have any guardianship or control over her, and when this bestowal and gift is once thus complete, the father of the girl has no further right to bestow her on anyone else.

That Draupadi's marriage with the five Pandava brothers successively, is a mischievous myth, is abundantly clear from the fact that her marriage with the five Pandavas does not belong to any of the eight forms of marriage known in India from the earliest Vedic times, nor could there have been any further bestowal of her by her father on any other Pandava after the completion of her marriage with Yudhisthira. Dhaumya, the selected and a pointed priest, officiated in the marriage with Yudhisthira only, the other marriages were only reported with the strange return of the virginity of Draupadi after no religious ceremony. There were no rules existing then sanctioning such marriages. Not that there were free inter-caste marriages, but a Brahman could marry a girl from his own caste as well as from any of the other three inferior castes, so could a Kshatriya and a Vaisya marry girls from their own castes as well as from the castes inferior to them, but generally none could marry a girl from a superior caste. Marriages with girls from inferior castes were known as Anuloma marriages.

The Manu Samhita gives the duties of men and women in the 9th Chapter, and quotes Vedas and Nigamas regarding incantations for the expiration of the sin of incest as follows:—

"In as much as my mother faithless to her lord, used to stroll about in quest of other men's (embraces,) may my father purify her ovum, defiled by her incests with others. This (Mantra of the Veda) serves as an illustration (of what has been said in the preceding couplet). For the expiation of the sin which a woman commits, by contemplating transgressions against her lord, however slight, this Mantra has been enjoined to be employed. As a river in contact with the sea becomes briny, so a woman acquires traits of mind and character similar to those of the man she has union with. Though born of vile castes, Akshamala, united with Vasistha and S'arangi, wedded to Mandapala, became highly glorified. These and other women of low origin acquired excellent traits of character through contact with the auspicious mental traits of their respective husbands.*

"Men, learned in history, recite a verse on the subject, framed by Vayu, which forbids men to sow their seeds in other men's wives. As an arrow, hit by one into the aperture of an arrow on the body of an animal previously shot by another, becomes futile, so the fruit of the seed, cast by one in the wife of another, does not belong to him. (Hence, a son procreated on another's wife does not belong to his progenitor). It is only with his wife and progeny that a man becomes complete. Hence the wise call the husband and wife as identical. By sale or separation (abandonment) the husband and wife cannot be liberated (severed) from each other; we know this law to have been originally made by the Creator of the universe. Only once can the partition of an estate be made, only once can a girl be given away in marriage, and only once can a thing be gifted. Each of these three things can be made only for once."†

* Manu Samhita, page 317, Chapter IX, verses 20–24.

† Manu Samhita, page 320, Chapter IX, verses 42–47.

Marriage amongst the ancient Hindus was an institution of training and perpetual tutelage. The husband took entire charge of the wife—her up-bringing, education, training and moulding of character. It was for this that the Shastra's enjoined sufficient disparity of age between the husband and the wife. The marriageable age of the girl was enjoined to be between 9 and 11 and that of the husband close upon 30, when he had completed his own education and training and was competent to take up the education of the would-be wife. The wife being of such tender age, and her whole up-bringing being in the hands of the husband, her husband became responsible for her training and the results of that training. This was the reason why the Hindu Shastras made the husband responsible for the acts and conduct of the wife and the wife not responsible for either her own or her husband's actions. With the marriage the life of a Hindu began, as it was with marriage that he settled in a household, and the comforts of home life rested solely on the married couple.

In the Svayambara marriage, the state of things was different, for such marriages could take place only in the case of girls who had attained the age of majority, *i.e.*, 16. In these cases the wife was sufficiently educated and cultured to take upon herself the task of selecting the husband and in many cases the office of guiding the husband, as is symbolised by the charioteering of their husbands by Subhadra and Kaikeyi. In actual warfare the task of the charioteer was more important and onerous than of the fighter or hero. The hero had to fight wherever he found himself confronted with foes, but the charioteer needed the keenness of an expert warrior, prevision and intelligence to discern and select at the right moment the spot where the hero's presence was most needed. It was for this that in the Great War of Kurukshettra none other than the great Sri Krishna, who was foremost in intelligence and political wisdom, could be the charioteer. The Svayambara marriage was confined to Kshatriya princesses only, and the heroines of both the Epics, Sita and Draupadi, were married by Svayambara ceremony.

The Svayambara marriage first originated with the marriage of Savitri, who was asked by her father to select a husband, but as she had made a defective choice, having made it without the knowledge of her father, that form of Svayambara did not continue and in future the Svayambara ceremony had to be held in the presence of the father and a public assembly of kings and distinguished personages so that there might be sufficient safeguards against a wrong or defective choice. And it was for this that at Draupadi's Svayambara the Suta Karna was not allowed to try the prescribed feat of archery, and when Arjuna, an unknown Brahmin urchin, performed the feat and

won Draupadi all the assembled Kshatriya kings rose in a body to denounce the winner and nullify the choice. They wanted to veto the choice on the ground of the impudence and audacity of a poor Brahmin to possess a highly cultured and beautiful Kshatriya princess.

But such objections did not appeal to Drupad or the distinguished Brahmin community present in the ceremony on the ground that the Pandavas combined the knowledge and wisdom of a Brahmin with the chivalry and heroism of a Kshatriya. The Brahmins offered to help the Pandavas, but Arjuna did not require their help. The five Pandavas proved quite a match for all the Kshatriya kings, which convinced Drupad and others that the five unknown Brahmins were none other than the five Pandavas, the controllers of the senses. It was not imperative or necessary that the winner should marry the girl. He could himself marry or make a gift of her to any other. It was for this that Bhisma won Amba and Ambalika for marrying them to Bichitrabirja and Pandu, and Arjuna won Draupadi at the Svayambara ceremony for the marriage of Yudhisthira, and Karna did the same thing for Durjodhana.

It was a time when the commanding intellect should have the throne and not the hero. There was something which touched the heart in direct contact with the gift of Nature or God. Something beautiful and patriotic for which no sacrifice was considered too dear. It was for this that the report of Draupadi's marriage with the five Pandavas was circulated and the Kurus, including Durjodhana and Karna, were deceived. The moral law with spiritual greatness was far superior to written law and custom. The sudden and dramatic appearance of the Pandavas as Brahmins in the Svayambara ceremony and the discovery of their adversaries in the fight that they were no other than the Pandavas, whom they thought to have been destroyed in the lac house might be said to be the real opening scene of the great Epic, where the success of the Pandavas and the winning of the emblem of prosperity, Draupadi, are a fitting prelude to their final success in the battle of Kurukshettra.

Truth cannot be obliterated. It can be discovered, if a real attempt is made. There are clear proofs in the revised Mahabharata that Draupadi was the wife of Yudhisthira alone and no one else. The revisers of the Epic did all they could to obliterate the evidences of Draupadi's real marriage with Yudhisthira but failed, and there are clear clues and observations to find out the truth even now. Remembrances last longer than present reality. The wound of conscience is no scar and time cools it not with his wing but only keeps it open with his scythe. The rose does not bloom without thorns, but they do not outlive the rose. The spirits of saints, heroes, heroines, artists, dramatists follow after the living man. Individuality is everywhere respected as the root

of everything good. Every nature puts forth its own fruit and cannot do otherwise. He who gives up the smallest part of a secret has no longer got the rest in his power. Without poesy and art the spirit grows weary and wooden. Habit and repute have been spoken of as constituting marriage, if it is not correctly described as the evidence from which marriage may be inferred. Repute is not the opinion of a section of society but the general, constant and unvarying belief of friends and neighbours.

Marriage was ultimately reduced to a form of contract in law when the mutual consent of parties became important. Marriage under the age of puberty without consent of the parents became void. This is somewhat peculiar in the human union of male and female as compared with the brute creation. It is not a question of necessity for protection, as it is with beasts. It is a question of sight, speech, sympathy, companionship, partnership, love and reason, if not religion itself. In fact, it is a great question of the greatest bond on earth which can embrace the whole round of all earthly endearments. This is the source of ideas of mother, motherland and nationality which the Hindus even now consider higher than Heaven itself. No sacrifice was too dear for mother or motherland so to defend them people gladly laid down their lives, for which act they were said to go to Heaven. Manners of men and women spring from their qualities, yet their happiness or misery chiefly depend on their actions. The main purpose of life is action rather than quality.

> "Now let us thank the Eternal Power; convinced
> That Heaven but tries our virtue by affliction,
> That of the cloud that wraps the present hour
> Serves but to brighten all our future days."

Evil times come, driving husband and wife apart from each other's beloved company to spend their days and nights in agony or sorrow, to try their individual culture and love, whether they are good and true. Sita, Sabya and Damayanti were such examples, but Draupadi was quite different, as was Kunti. Draupadi was the model example of a cultured queen and wife, and Kunti that of a queen mother of Ancient India. Men do not agree as to the true ideal of happiness. It is, no doubt, the divine gift. It is nothing less than cowardice to shun the trials and crosses of life. To die, in order to avert a disaster, is not noble. To feel pleasure and pain and overcome the trouble largely depends on the ability, culture and education of a man and woman.

Action springs from the habits of the just and temperate, and in the acts of the wicked nothing seems to be so preposterous as those which, when they deceive, manage in some way to look most virtuous and

upright. If Draupadi's marriage was of that description her name would not have found a place in the great Epic and she would not have come down to posterity as a virtuous queen whose name is even now recited by Indians to dispel sin. Evils bring men together; *i.e.*, when the same thing is harmful to both they become friends. "Misery acquaints a man with strange bed-fellows" (Shakespeare). In poverty and misfortune men think of friends as their only refuge. A good man sympathises with one in distress. Draupadi's marriage was an illustration of it. Svayambara was a political marriage and not an ordinary marriage.

A state may be said to be a society of people, united together by families and children to live happily. Husband and wife are not mere questions of domestic happiness in a royal family. There have been political, moral and religious obligations of the highest nature in their union. It was for this that nobility and royalty carried very great respect in Ancient India. They were all distinguished men of the day and the happiness or misery of the state depended on the virtue and wisdom of the king and queen who ruled the state. They were not ordinary mortals but ideals of the highest order whom the good kings and wise sages accepted as worthy of being declared Emperor and Empress of India in Rajasuya and Asvamedha sacrifices. Yudhisthira and Draupadi, as king and queen, performed these sacrifices. Ramachandra performed the Asvamedha sacrifice with the golden image of Sita and not with the actual Sita in exile. It is a clear proof of the fact that Draupadi was not the common wife of the Pandavas, which tale was only circulated for securing peace. The marriage of Draupadi with Yudhisthira alone and not with the five Pandavas was recorded in the texts of the Mahabharata with Dhaumya* officiating as the priest. The report was circulated merely to avert the war after the marriage as a political move of the highest importance. It was not a marriage for their own individual pleasures but for the friendship of the fighting families of India, where the ideal man and woman of the royal blood harmonised in their nuptial ties with everything humane and divine, and earned love and esteem.

The world very often judges wrongly from failures and successes in marriage, but the secret of mutual happiness seems to be mutual understanding. When people marry out of pure love and have to marry on certain disadvantageous or inconvenient conditions, they are not deterred from the marriage by prudential considerations of propriety or impropriety, or from considerations of shame or disgrace. Sometimes people marry for serving some useful purpose in life, in society or in politics. These bold facts of great love and political policy were

*Adi Parva, Chapter CC of the English translation of the Mahabharata.

underlying the marriage of Draupadi. The sad and forlorn life of the Pandavas was sweetened by the marriage of Draupadi. The question of marriage of the Indian Epic heroines Sita and Draupadi were the outcome of boons obtained in their previous lives through religious fervour. The great poet Kalidas worked this idea into his famous poem Kumarsambhava about Uma's marriage. Uma won Siva's hand through religious austerities.

In the Epic marriage is not a question of mutual happiness of the married couple but has been a great question of politics, religion and boon of emancipation. Sita wanted Narayana to be her consort and her wish was fulfilled in her next life, but it was not happy in the worldly sense of the word. Draupadi's fate was no brighter. She triumphed in the end, but the loss of her dear and near ones was irreparable. The question of Draupadi's marriage should not be judged by the ordinary standards of custom, etc. The family of five senses represented in a man must be united to those of a woman of great culture to live closer together than ever. It was not a social bond of civilisation but what a nation ought to preserve as the lesson of marriage from the religious point of emancipation through love of unselfishness and sacrifice in thought, action and temperament. Sri Krishna was indentified with Draupadi's marriage to stand up against preconceived notions, so that people and a nation could be intellectually and spiritually great in realising divine love more than mere earthly love, for which Sita entered the earth disappointed even though she was the beloved wife of Rama, an incarnation of Narayana. It was not a question of the mere controlling of passion by chaste habits and manners called chastity, the test of earthly love, whose idea was not the same throughout and all over the world.in all ages.

Draupadi's marriage raises important historical, mythological and religious questions of the time. The authors of the Indian Epics with a view to create dramatic interest introduced their heroines' births, marriages and disappearances, as novelties in the realm of the religion of divine love. Their object was achieved and the greatest interest was created, but it was like the interest people feel in a thing at which they look agape. They were puzzled at the bold dramatic creation in Sita's birth from the earth and Draupadi's from fire. There was a fight between Rama and Parasurama over the breaking of the reputed bow of Siva and the Pandavas in the guise of Brahmins gave a rude shock to the chivalries of the Kshatriyas of the day by winning the prize of Draupadi, in the public assembly of Svayambara. The marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas was a question of all questions in Draupad's court and continued till the days of Janmejoya.

The revisers of the Mahabharata found it difficult to reconcile this, and they attempted to do so by putting a question in king Janmejoya's mouth and answering it by quoting a peace arrangement made by the famous celestial sage Narada. But it was like the thief's mistake in forgetting to wash his feet and to obliterate his footprints. The dramatic interpolators forgot that Narada's name in Hindu mythology is synonymous with quarrel-mongering and it has passed into a proverb, and for him to strive after and devise means for peace itself smacks of absurdity. His advice would better fit in with the scene after the marriage, where Karna was urging Durjodhana to give battle to the Pandavas before they could be firmly united with the Panchal and Yadus and their friends.

"It is impossible to create disunion amongst them when they have a common wife, nor is it possible to estrange Draupadi from them by spies when she chose them while in adversity but now they are in prosperity. The Pandavas cannot be won over by any policy or machination or bribery or disunion. Give up that idea. It is only proper that before the Pandavas are united with the Panchals and Yadabs, Durjodhana, you should not waste any time to give them immediate fight by your prowess, so that the combined effort might not wrest from you their kingdom. Prowess is the cardinal virtue of the Kshatriyas and one should follow th s if he wants to be successful in this world."*

It would be more appropriate for Narada then to have rather forecasted dissension and quarrel among the Pandava brothers by citing the story of the destruction of Sunda and Upasunda, brothers, for the possession of the beautiful Tilottama to set at rest the wrong theory of Karna. This is the text of the advice of Karna and it was set at rest by Narada's story of Tilottama, where the two brothers fought and destroyed when trying to possess Tilottama. Durjodhana clearly admitted in his reply to Krishna during his peace mission that he was once deceived when he was young and the Pandavas got everything then, but there was no chance of repeating it again.

"O Krishna! This kingdom which ought not to have been given away was given away when I depended on others, out of ignorance or fear when I was a child O Janardana! It is not now to be regained by the sons of Pandu. So long as the position of king is held by Dhritarastra, O delighter of the Vrishnis, not even such a small bit of land as is pierced by the point of a sharp needle shall I give to the Pandavas."†

The Svayambara of Draupadi was thought to be the proper incident and place to expose the atrocious attempt of vicious Kurus to destroy the Pandavas in the lac house. The dramatic appearance of the Pandavas in the guise of Brahmanas after long disappearance and their becoming victors in an unjust fight and the winners of Draupadi was

* Adi Parva, Chapter CCIV, verses 6 and 21.
† Udyoga Parva, Chapter CXXVII, verses 23—25.

nothing but a significant prelude to the great fight of Kurukshettra. The great Krishna, the Pandavas and Draupadi with her family came into the limelight of the political world of Ancient India. Sita was the cause of the destruction of the vicious Ravana and his family and so was Draupadi to establish the kingdom of the Pandavas, destroying the enemies of the Brahmanas, the Kurus, followers of Charvaka and Kanika. Draupadi was more accomplished and advanced than Sita in every respect. She was the friend of Krishna, wife of the wise Yudhisthira, the mainspring of the Pandava household who managed the wild powerful Bhima and the great hero Arjuna.

Every one of the five Pandavas had wives and children*. Arjuna married Subhadra, the sister of Krishna, and the line of Arjuna ruled eventually and the composition of the Mahabharata is attributed to Arjuna's descendant Janmejoya. The historical position of the heroes and heroines of the Mahabharata can be seen in the Rajasuya and Asvamedha sacrifices of the Pandavas. They were the crowning ceremonies of king Yudhisthira after the marriage and the war. There the great Draupadi was installed as the queen of Yudhisthira on both occasions. The heroism of Krishna and his great services in the cause of humanity by the destruction of Jarasandha, who was going to be declared the Emperor of India by a cruel human sacrifice, the liberation of the numerous kings of India kept in prison by him, the clearing of the great forest of Khandaba and the founding of Indraprastha by the Pandavas were recognised in spite of strong opposition from Sisupala by according the place of honour to Krishna in the Rajasuya sacrifice. Krishna killed Sisupala and won the laurel of oblation and reverence there. The party who made Sisupala their mouthpiece had to yield. There was no objection to Draupadi's being declared the Empress of India in the Rajasuya.

A still more absurd attempt is found in the explanation of the absurdity of the marriage by making Yudhisthira agree to and advise the joint marriage out of fear of difference and wrath betrayed in the demeanour of his brothers. Not to speak of the still more absurd explanation spun out of an alleged absurdly foolish and ignorant behest of Kunti to her sons to enjoy in common the fruit of their begging, which they had told her they had got, without first caring to ascertain what the fruit was, nor could the good Pandavas seriously be believed to have been so wanting in their duty as to be joking with their mother by describing Draupadi as a fruit of begging, which she certainly was not. All these seemingly paradoxical explanations show the idle brains of rhapsodists. These explanations, though they have not satisfied people, have stilled

* Adi Parva, Chapter XCV, verses 75—80.

questionings, like putting a host of syllogisms to flight with a sneer or with a quotation of spurious authority. The culmination of absurdity is reached when learned students of the Epics swallow this absurd fiction as a fact and use it as a lever to throw back the whole age of the Epic rather than the far simpler, more rational and logical course of throwing away this absurdity as a base fiction.

The births, marriages and disappearances of the heroines of the great Indian Epics formed the bedrock of Hindu mythology of the religion of divine love and nothing else. It was for this the heroines of the Indian Epics sought the form of Svayambara marriage not recited in the recognised Hindu institutes of Manu, etc. The ideas of morality, decency and chastity were far more advanced, strict and hard in the age when the Pandavas flourished than in the Vedic age. Since the days of Svetaketu and Dirghatama the Hindu marriage system was crystallised into a sacrament and regulated by laws, as is evident from the discussions and objections of Drupad and his son as well as from the text of the great Epics. It cannot be overlooked that Madhabi, daughter of king Yajati, who had not hesitated to be given away to four kings successively to propagate the lines of kings in Ancient India, sternly refused to comply with her father's wish when he asked her to accept marriage by Svayambara and she went to the woods to practise religious austerities. Her refusal to accept marriage by Svayambara was inconsistent with the ideas of life then prevalent. It may be that Madhabi's marriage with the four signifies nothing but the Vedic form of marriage in which Soma accepts first, then Gandharva, then Agni, and then the son of man is the fourth to accept the girl, as recited before from the Panchavimsa Brahmana. Fire is invoked as favouring law of worshippers, the divine purifier and the great witness of the unbreakable marriage tie. Poor dramatic revisers, to make the Pandavas demi-gods, foisted upon Kunti the story and the name of Madhabi in the great Epic.*

The theory of divine love is beautifully clear in the presence of Sri Krishna by the discovery of five Pandavas in the form of Brahmins and winning over Maya or Prakriti in Draupadi or Krishnah. It may mean that the five senses reflected in the five Pandavas in the receptacle of Maya displayed in Draupadi must be combined and co-ordinated with true and sincere love, for marriage without such auxiliary co-ordination of the forces of love, the concentration of mind controlling the five senses, cannot be effected in producing divine love. Krishna's famous conch-shell was named Panchajanya and Draupadi's marriage to Panch jan (five persons) or five senses cannot but have clear relation to

*Professor M. N. Dutt's Translation, Adi Parva (Jaturgriha) Chapter CL, verse 6.

divine love. The conch Panchajanya gave warning of impending danger and death to friends and foes alike on the religious battlefield of Kurukshettra, demonstrating the works of Panchajan (Pandavas) under the leadership of Sri Krishna wedded to the divine love of Draupadi to send even the wicked and vile to Heaven to be transformed into good.

It is for this that the author describes Yudhisthira, the incarnation of virtue, on his translation to Heaven to have first found there his wicked adversaries, who fell victims on the famous battlefield and not his own brothers or wife. The question put by Professor Max Muller in his "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," why was Drupad's daughter Krishnah, the common wives of the sons of Pandu? should not have found a place in it, (p. 47), for one answer to it is to be found in the Markandeya Purana which is as follows :—

"The adorable Indra (King) became incarnate in five forms. His auspicious wife was born as Krishna from Agni (fire); she, Krishna, was the wife of Indra alone and no one else."*

Indra, it is said in the Shanti Parva, Chapter LXVII, verse 4, is the name of a king:—

"The Srutis (Vedas) say that in crowning a king, it is Indra that is crowned in the person of the king. A person who seeks his own prosperity, should adore the king as he should adore Indra himself."

Besides, it cannot be overlooked that there is the important allusion to the five deities anxious to possess Damayanti at her Svayambara marriage ceremony.

"Thereupon the fair-complexioned Damayanti entered the amphitheatre: and thus attracted the eyes and hearts of the assembled princes. When the kings beheld her, their eyes, unmoved, were firmly fixed upon those parts of her body, wherever they had fallen first. Thereupon, O Bharata, the names of the kings having been uttered, the daughter of Bhima beheld five persons all alike in their form. Thereafter the daughter of the king of Vidarbhas, having seen all of them of similar forms, could not make out which one was prince Nala; for doubts had already arisen in her mind. Whomsoever she saw amongst the kings, she supposed him to be the prince Nala; and thus the thoughtful lady pondered, and deliberated in her mind. 'How shall I discern the gods, and how shall I ascertain prince Nala?' This thought engrossed the mind of the daughter of the king of the Vidarbhas, and also afflicted her with great grief. O Bharata, she deliberated in her mind upon the marks of which she heard, as appertaining to the gods :—'I have heard from the old men whatever marks belong to the celestials, and indeed those are never seen to appertain to any one of these assembled in this earth.' Thus she thought on this subject over and over in several ways, and came to the conclusion, '*viz.*—that she should, after saluting the celestials, with the mind and words, and with joined hands, resolve upon obtaining the assistance of the gods themselves. Trembling with fear she spoke to the celestials thus: 'On hearing the words of the swans I accepted the prince of the Nishadas as my husband. For the sake of that vow of mine, O celestials, point him out to me. As I am always firm to him either in speech or thought, so for the sake of that truth, it behoves the celestials to point him out to me. When it was settled to

* Professor Pargiter's Markan deya Purana, canto V, verses 24-25.

me by the celestials that the prince of the Nishadhas should be my husband; for the sake of that truth it behoves the celestials to point him to me. When I have commenced my vow for the worship of king Nala; for the sake of that truth, it behoves the celestials to reveal him to me. It behoves the Lokapalas, the most excellent of the gods, therefore, to assume their respective forms, that I may ascertain that virtuous prince (Nala). The celestials, having heard the words of Damayanti full of compassion, and known for certain that her love for the prince of the Nishadhas was most fervent, and also realising her fixed will, purity of heart and mind and her passion for that prince, fulfilled what they had been prayed for by assuming their proper forms. She then beheld all the gods, not perspiring, with fixed eyes and spotless garlands (round their necks), and seated without touching the earth. She, on the other hand, saw Nala standing pre-eminent with his own shadow, and (unlike the gods) full of perspiration, and with floral wreaths stained with dust, and the king of the Nishadhas was also seated on the ground with staring eyes. She saw both the celestials and that righteous king. The daughter of Bhima accepted (as her husband) the prince of the Nishadhas in accordance with her vow. The bashful and larged-eyed maiden held the flying-end of her cloth, and put a most handsome garland round his neck. Thus the fair-faced damsel had chosen him as her lord. Thereupon all the celestials suddenly gave utterance to their woe by saying. 'Ah! Alas!!' All the celestials and the great sages became struck with amazement, and uttered the cry. 'Excellent and Excellent,' while at the same time they were praising king Nala. O Kauravya! the prince—the son of Virasena, with the gladness of heart, consoled that fair-complexioned maiden thus :—'O blessed one, as you rejecting all the gods, chose a man to be your lord; so know me, therefore, for your husband, ever ready to obey your words (or command). O you of blameless smiles, I truly promise to you that as long as my life will reside in my body, till then I will continue to be yours.' Damayanti, with joined hands, showed due respect to him (Nala) by similar expressions. Thereupon the happy pair, each having seen those celestials headed by Agni, mentally prayed for their protection. Then the guardians of the worlds of great splendour, beholding the prince of the Nishadhas accepted by the daughter of Bhima, became greatly gratified; and they all granted to Nala eight boons. At first Sakra, the husband of Sachi, well pleased, bestowed upon the king of the Nishadhas a boon, *viz.*, that in the sacrifices he should attain to divinity, and thence to each of the extraordinarily great and happy abodes. Agni gave assurance of his own presence wherever the king of the Nishadhas would wish. Hutashana also granted to him regions as resplendent as himself. Then again Yama lent him a superior taste for food, as well as a highest place in virtue. The presiding god of the water granted to Nala the boon of his own presence wherever he would wish, as well as floral wreaths of superior fragrance. Thus each one of the assembled gods had given Nala a couple of boons. Having granted these boons to him, all the celestials returned to Heaven.' *

Besides, there is a story of the Mahabharata which illustrates in the examples of the Pandavas five essential things on which success in life depends, *viz*: patience, wisdom, progress, skill, place and time. The great author inculcated this, putting it in the mouth of the god of wealth, Kuvera, (Bana Parva, Chapter CLXII, verse 1.), and finally connecting the Pandavas:

"O the best of men and mighty-armed one, being appointed by me will protect you as well as these best of the Brahmanas. O king, O the best of the virtuous, O

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* The Mahabharata, Chapter LVII, Vana Parva, verses 8—39, pages 84-85, (English Translation) by Professor M. N. Dutt.

pure one, considering that Bhima has come here through rashness, do you check him. O king, henceforth creatures inhabiting the forest will always visit you, wait on you, and protect you all. O the best of men, my attendants will always procure for you various eatables and drinkables, sweet to the taste. As Jishnu (Arjuna) has a claim to the protection of Mahendra, Vrikodara of the wind god, you of Dharma, and the powerful twins of the Asvinis, in virtue of being their respective offsprings, so, O Yudhisthira, you all have a claim to my protection. Flaguni the next by birth to Bhimasena, versed in the science of profit, and acquainted with the principles of all duties, is all right in Heaven. O child, those virtues which are considered in the world as leading to Heaven, reside in Dhananjaya even from his very birth. In that high-souled being of unrivalled energy reside all these (qualities) of self-control, charity, strength, intelligence modesty, patience, and excellent energy. O Pandavas, Jishnu never commits any disgraceful act (even) through ignorance. And men never speak to their fellows of his ever having uttered lies."*

The Mahabharata is a history of success, victory or Yaya as referred to in the very invocation verse. Apart from the innate absurdity of a marriage of one cultured delicate girl with five powerful, well-built heroes of the day, not spoken of in any of the nineteen institutes or codes of ancient Hindu laws, the story in question had perhaps much to do with the creation of this fiction. One can hardly overlook that prosperity and success in the mundane and spiritual world depend more upon the five attributes than anything else. The institutes of the Hindus mention ten purificatory rites, and marriage is one of them. The object in making the Pandavas appear as Brahmanas at the Svayambara place meant that they went through the necessary purificatory rites and initiations just as rigidly as a Brahmana would observe them and there they were far superior to any of the Kshatriya princes present in the assembly. Draupadi stood for prosperity or joy in life and to win her would require the co-ordination of these five qualities coupled with the sympathy of universal love reflected in Sri Krishna, the only source of success in all spheres of life. The Pandavas won the sympathy and love of Sri Krishna not by connection of birth or relationship but by their good conduct and at the time of the purificatory ceremony of marriage. Draupadi was not won by the shooting of the target by an arrow but by the declaration of Sri Krishna of the final decision of the bridal party.

"Vaishampayana said:—Seeing that feat of Bhima and Krishna believed them both to be the sons of Kunti. Gently addressing the assembled monarchs by saying. 'This maiden has been greatly won (by the Brahmanas)' he induced them to desist from the fight. Having thus desisted from the battle, those best of monarchs, those (heroes) well-skilled in battle, returned to their respective kingdoms,—all becoming exceedingly surprised."†

It was the divine love of Sri Krishna, the guiding star of the Pandavas, which led the Pandavas to the Svayambara ceremony of Drau-

*** The Mahabharata, Vana Parva, Chapter CLXII, verses 12—21, pages 237-238.**

† Adi Parva, Chapter CXCII, page 263, verses 36-37. (The Mahabharata English Translation) by Professor M. N. Dutt.

padi. He knew of the escape of the Pandavas from the lac house and d all about the marriage of Draupadi with her father. He and his brother Balarama encouraged the Pandavas with words of sympathy and success by a private visit to them in their hiding place. The following quotations from the great Epic will speak for themselves. Drupada's parting words are significant from the discovery of the man who was at the bottom of the marriage of Draupadi.

"Having considered all the circumstances, I certainly agree with the foremost of men, the heroic and mighty armed Dasaratha (Krishna). There is no doubt the illustrious sons of Kunti, the Pandavas, are now to me as they are to Vashudeva. The son of Kunti, Yudhisthira, himself does not seek the welfare of the Pandavas so much as this foremost of men Kesava (Krishna) does."*

Krishna and Balarama visited the Pandavas privately before the marriage.

" Be blessed, grow in prosperity as a fire in a cave gradually grows and spreads itself all around. Lest any of the kings recognise you, give us permission to return to our camp. Then obtaining the permission of the Pandavas, Krishna of undying prosperity, accompanied with Valadeva, soon went away."†

Krishna knew that the Pandavas were not burnt at the lac house.

"I heard that the sons of Pandu and Pritha had escaped from the fire of the lac house. Then Halayuda of the complexion of clouds charged with rains spoke thus to his younger brother in joy, 'I am glad to hear that our father's sister Pritha, with the foremost of the Kuru Princes (the Pandavas) has escaped (from the lac house)."‡

It was Vyasa who visited the Pandavas and invited them to come with a duly appointed priest to the Svayambara of Draupadi. It was he who invested Drupada with the celestial sight by his wonderful ascetic power to make him realise that the so-called five was actually one. Drupada was greatly surprised at seeing the celestial manifestation of illusion and touched the feet of Vyasa, praising him very much. His words before and after the marriage are very significant (Chapter CC) and are as follow :—

"Drupada said:—O great Rishi it is only when I had not heard from you all this that I intended to act in the way I have already told you. I am now incapable of acting against what has been ordained by the celestials. I therefore desire to act as you have said. The knot of destiny cannot be untied. There is nothing which is the result of our own actions. That which was made to secure one husband (for my daughter) becomes now the source of this (new) ordinance. As Krishna (Draupadi) had repeatedly asked (in her former life) for five times saying "Give me a husband," the great deity had granted her the boon accordingly. The deity himself knows the right or the wrong of this."§

* Adi Parva, Chapter CCIX, page 281, verses 7—9.

† Adi Parva, Chapter CXCIII, page 264, verse 26.

‡ The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter CXCI, page 261. (English Translation by Professor M. N. Dutt). Verses 23-24.

§ Adi Parva, Chapter CC, verses 1—3, page 272.

It is evident from this that Drupada realised the policy behind the declaration. Nor is this all. The Mahabharata gives the names of sages of pure soul immortalised by their knowledge and works in the version of Yudhisthira as follows :—

"You have seen with your own eyes the great ascetic Markandeya of incomparable magnanimity come to us who has been rendered immortal by virtue. Vyasa, Vasistha, Maitreya, Narada, Lomasha, Suka and all other Rishis have become of pure souls by virtue."*

Its evident prominence is given to Markendeya over Vyasa, Narada, etc. It is therefore clear that where there is difference in the versions of Vyasa, Markendeya's version must prevail and is the deciding factor. It is quite plain that there is a mystery behind the five husbands of Draupadi as Vyasa refused to talk on this matter publicly (*vide* Adi Parva, Chapter CXCVIII, verses 19—21) and took Drupada aside. It is quite evident that in those days of great advancement it became necessary to devise means to impress things upon the imagination of the general public. The author of the great Epic had to dispense with the dry, prosaic presentation of abstract causes and of brilliant success in life and resorted to personifications of them in the Pandavas, created Draupadi as an emblem of success or prosperity and presented Sri Krishna in the limelight of universal love instead of partisanship in the Svayambara fight from the very first appearance in the Epic.

That the great author created five different persons as sons of great deities of religion and elements instead of showing the combination of the five qualities in one ideal man, *e.g.*, by the personifications of justice, truth and forbearance in Yudhisthira, of prowess in Bhima, of skill and dutiful following in Arjuna and of the ever inseparable co-relations of time and place in the twins Nakul and Sahadeb, are quite clear in the great Epic. The co-ordination of these qualities combined with the love of Draupadi and sympathy of Sri Krishna, the universal solvent, achieved the glorious success on the great religious battle field of Kurukshettra.

The great Epic, history of success as it is called, has a greater and higher sphere of action than mere history of incidents of social life. The marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas, representing as it does the five attributes of success or prosperity from the material to the spiritual world, cannot necessarily be a question of physical connection of body. If it were so, Draupadi would have been connected and known with an epithet characteristic of five husbands, instead of Krishnah or Panchali, nor was Kunti known by any such name establishing her connection with the gods above. Likewise the names of their

* Vana Parva, Chapter XXXI, verses 11-12, page 45.

sons were not connected with their fathers like Draupadi and Pandavas or Kaunteya or Partha. Partha does not mean Arjuna alone in Shanti Parva, Chapter 195. Yudhisthira is addressed by that name. Yudhisthira was known by the special name of Ajatasatru (enemiless), Bhima dreadful, Arjuna ambidexterous.

Kunti or Karna had no such name justifying their connection with the God Sun. The Indian Pluto was called the father of Yudhisthira for his piety, truth, faith and unbiased judgment. The Indian Pluto, Yama, declares his feat on the day of judgment. He was the son of the God Sun; necessarily a question of great importance so far as Heavenly decency is concerned arises in the alleged use of sage Durbasa's incantation by which Kunti was reported to have a son Karna by the Sun and Yudhisthira by the Sun's son, Yama or Dharma or Pluto, especially when the Epic relates the fall of king Mahavisha, Ganga, Urbasi, etc., from Heaven on that very ground of decency. The names of Kunti and Draupadi are found connected with their fathers' names. Kunti's real name was Pritha. Draupadi's name Krishna refers to her blue-sky like complexion, like Sri Krishna and Panchali, for recovering the lost glory of her father's kingdom, her own birth place. Besides, she was the first Nationalist lady of the front rank and rendered the greatest service by levelling to the ground the vanity and unjust domination of Kshatriya kings of India in the great battle fought at Kurukshettra to destroy the atheism of Charvaka in person and theory.

The peculiar complexion and characteristics of the age represented in Draupadi made her the real heroine of the great Epic of a later day, inspite of her name not being found in its table of contents anywhere so as to justify her becoming the centre of attraction and interest in the great Epic over her marriage question. Moral revolutions mislead men more than physical ones. Wisdom and morality are the organic parents of the mental future. Deeds and books are the means by which men have been able to work upon the world. Three things are very difficult to discover and to impart, firstly, distance hides the finer side of virtue and the black spots of vice in the past in the decorative paintings in the Epic; secondly, what is below and above the earth, and thirdly, what is God.

Living religion grows not by doctrines but by the narratives of the holy books. The best religious doctrine is that taught by the lives of the different prophets with the sufferings and deaths of their followers. Happiness dances, it seems, in childhood, the active body dances after the happy soul, but in youth the earth is a beloved place full of childish remembrances, the feeling of indescribable strength and sweetness, the star of love flying over the blossoms of youth to smile and sigh

in a golden horizon of infinite hope, of morning red round the rising sun. But the mature man or woman can in dancing only express the beauty of art, not themselves nor their own emotions. Love would thus comfort itself in artistic forms rather than natural. Nature sent man and woman the bridal dower of love. Feelings come and go like the troops following a victory. Reasons change and affect the firm man more easily than women. Lightning passes through solid bodies better than the thin air. Mothers and wives are more devoted than fathers and husbands. They make more sacrifices than men for their love.

Woman is all heart; she feels but does not see herself. She seldom does anything with reason. But certainly an educated maiden like Draupadi is a poetic flower of love in the dull world. She is the dream picture of Holy Eden, her sufferings of life her patriotic love and religion are very beautiful. One must understand that the Epic characters are not the representatives of the sham world, full of custom and having nothing of duty and sacrifice. Draupadi and Yudhisthira belonged to the great world where nobility of soul, character, principles and patriotism are more valued than cut and dried rules of life. They were despisers of pleasures and examples of earnestness of purpose, who brought all things into life and ascended the throne of eternity. Charms lie on the surface, glitter and produce vanity, but the excellence of morality leaves its possessors modest and lies beneath the surface. Nature meant to make and made woman its masterpiece. He who can disregard law is quite as powerful as he who is bound by no law, and such is also the case with a woman. Wisdom is only in truth. He is the happiest man who can place the end of his life in connection with the beginning. Yudhisthira and Draupadi came to the world with a certain mission in life which they fulfilled. He who does not think too much of himself is much more esteemed than he who does. In all times it is only individuals who labour to advance knowledge by their culture and examples and the ages are not responsible for the progress of virtue suppressing vice. "The first and last thing which is required of genius," says Goethe, "is the love of truth." The author of the Great Epic lays down the principle when circumstances justify the telling of a lie and it is considered virtuous or *vice versa* in Chapter 82, verses 16-17.*

*English Translation of the Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter LXXXII, page 123, verses 16-17:—"It is not sinful to speak falsehood in the following five cases, namely in joke, in respect of women to be associated with, in marriage, in prospect of immediate death, and at the time of the loss of one's whole fortune. O king, it is not true that he is fallen who does not speak out the truth when asked (for there are occasions when to speak falsehood is an act of piety). The falsehood is sinful when one (harmful) object is to be accomplished."

It is evident from the above quotation that the alleged political subterfuge was resorted to in the report of Draupadi's marriage with all the Pandavas, which was quite contrary to what had actually taken place. Moral character carries with it the highest power of causing a thing to be believed. It is held that virtue and vice are to be considered with the intention behind the act and not the act itself or its report. Law is a mere pledge; it cannot make all good unless there is proper education and culture. Nobility is created by the morality. due to education and manners not corrupted from infancy. If the masses refrain from doing wrong from the mere fear of punishment, then sheer want will make them the worst beasts. Virtue and vice depend upon education and discipline more than anything else. Nobility is the virtue of a family. It has very little or no connection with birth at first, until a family gives proof of it in continuous succession. Morality is nothing but a standard of temperate habits of life and discipline. Men and women must have perception of good and evil.

A state has a distinct and important duty, like parents of a family, to bring unity among men of different inclinations, like children, by strict practice of discipline, education and rule, performing their legitimate functions in co-operating for the general welfare instead of fighting for selfish ends. It is quite natural for everyone to have an affection for his own, but to have such a love in excess of what is legitimate is a vice. In works of art the excellence lies in the workmanship, but virtuous deeds themselves show no such thing but the man or woman who is their author is extolled for his or her individual character. He acts knowingly with deliberate choice and with fixed aim and principle so that his acts are equitable to all. He does not assert his rights to the utmost but is willing to take something less, even though he may have law on his side. It is for this that Yudhisthira asked for Panchagrama, not five villages, but there was the significant, the sly hint against the Kurus. Durjodhana and his friends realised the true implication of the word Panchagram (meaning control over the five senses) and were so annoyed with the home-thrust, that they feigned to take it in the literal sense and openly declared before the public assembly that not to speak of five villages not even the space held by a needle's point would be given without warfare, and held consultation as to how to imprison Sri Kṛishna.

Mothers are fonder of their children than fathers, as mothers know the pain of bringing them forth and have knowledge of their own. Good men sympathise most with themselves in joy and sorrow for the same always gives them the same pain and joy. Animals live in a state of

nature and in few things by custom, but man has to depend on something else called reason.

In the eyes of a wise judge proofs of reasoning are of more value than eye-witnesses. Glory follows virtue as if it were its shadow. The Hindus even now recite the names of virtuous Kunti and Draupadi, as the ideal mother and wife, to dispel the sins of domestic life. Not to prove what happened before one was born is always to be a child. The great poet Shakespeare said :—

> " If circumstances lead me, I will find
> Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
> Within the centre."
> (HAMLET, Act II, Scene 2.)

Nature has inspired man with a desire for seeing the truth. Reason is the mistress and queen of all things. Philosophy rose from the powers of mind. It roots out vice and prepares the mind to solve the great question of divinity. There is no greater theatre for virtue than conscience. Mind has comprehended the revolution of the earth, the complicated attractions and movements of planets and earth which make day and night, eclipse, ebb and flow. Is it difficult for such a human intellect to find out the truth of Draupadi's marriage? It was realised by the revisers that it would be difficult to reconcile the report of Draupadi's marriage with the Pandavas and every attempt was made to explain it in different ways.

Apart from the all important serious aspects of the question of Draupadi's marriage there is something very comic in it. Envy is the worst of all the ills of life. It is the base attendant of an impious soul. Birth and death are equally mysterious, but marriage is not. Satire is the best enjoyment in marriage celebrations of the Hindu even now. Everyone tries to raise a laugh to add enjoyment to the marriage assembly. Many things were said without much thought other than to raise a laugh. Even the great characters were not spared and the young and the old, even the mad rabble, repeat it. The report of the marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas was a sort of red rag to the mad bulls of disappointed princes, and nobody could object to it as the occasion was one for merry-making and jest. The report went abroad and got a firm footing in the mind of the mob amidst the joyous festival.

> "Satire's my weapon, but I'm too discreet
> To run amuck, and tilt at all I meet" (Pope 234, Latin)

> "The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."
> SHAKESPEARE.
> (Midsummer Night's Dream, Act V., Scene I.)

The mind charmed by false appearances refuses to admit the truth.

"His comic humour kept the world in awe,
And Laughter frightened Folly more than Law."

Ridicule often cuts the Gordian Knot more effectively and better than severity of satire.

The epithet Ajatsatru attached to the name of Yudhisthira has a tale to tell about the invectives found in the great Epic against the great man. The reasons are not far to seek.

"When malice is joined to envy, there is given forth poisonous and feculent matter, as ink from the cuttle-fish.*"

The name Ajatsatru was borne by a powerful king of Benares and also by another king of Magadha who became a convert to Buddhism. The king Ajatsatru of Benares was very anti-Brahmanical, and the other king Ajatsatru had forsaken the Brahmanical religion altogether. The Brahmins naturally had a great animus for the Ajatsatrus, and in order to belittle Ajatsatrus, it is no wonder if they introduced Draupadi's five husbands episode, her dragging into the public assembly and the unseemly and shocking attempt to make her nude, their exile and their wanderings in the forest, to heap ridicule and contempt on this Ajatsatru, in the hope that the ignominees of one Ajatsatru would be visited upon all Ajatsatrus.

It is well-known that Yajnavalkya, who was instrumental in the dramatic revision; belonged to Mithila (Videha), and though Videhi Sita was exiled for a mere breath of suspicion for her being touched by Ravana, the dramatic revision makes Draupadi, not only touched, but dragged by the hair into the public hall and there attempted to be unclothed and made nude. They also intended a hit against the Buddhist Ajatsatru by making this Ajatsatru (Yudhistira) have a common wife with his brothers like Buddhistic Tihetans who used to have a common wife for all the brothers.

These seemingly divergent standards of chastity in the two Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, bespeak different influences. Benares, which was the place of Vyasa and was once the centre of Buddhistic influence, presented one standard of chastity, and Videha (Mithila), which was the centre of Yajnavalkya's influence, presented a far stricter standard of chastity. Sita for a mere breath of suspicion of alien touch was thought unfit to participate in the coronation of Rama, but Draupadi, though represented as the common wife of five husbands, was not in any way thought unfit to be crowned empress at Yudhistira's coronation. From all these it is abundantly clear that there were some mysterious influences at work behind this creation of the heroine of the

* Plutarch (S. N. V. page 565 C). "Beautiful Thoughts from Latin Authors," page 280.

dramatic Mahabharata, whereas the heroines of the original Mahabharata were Kunti and Gandhari, as set out in the Anukramanika, where the name of Draupadi does not occur.

The theory of transmigration of souls, of which Yajnavalkya was the propounder, is also illustrated in both the Epics, in the Ramayana by Sita, who in her former life was Bedavati and in the Mahabharata by Draupadi, who in her former life was an austere worshipper of Siva and had got a boon from him to have Indra as her husband, and in her next life she became a worshipper of Sri Krishna.

"The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad contains an interesting conversation, in which King Ajatsatru of Kaci (Benares) instructs the Brahman, Balaki Gargya, that Brahma is not the spirit (Purusha) which is in sun, moon, wind, and other natural phenomena, or even in the (waking) soul (Atman), but is either the dreaming soul, which is creative, assuming any form at pleasure, or, in the highest stage, the soul in dreamless sleep, for here all phenomena have disappeared. This is the first and the last condition of Brahma, in which no world exists, all material existence being only the phantasms of the dreaming world soul."

"Of somewhat similar purport is a passage of the Chhandogya (viii. 7—12), where Prajapati is represented as teaching the nature of the Atman in three stages. The soul in the body as reflected in a mirror or water is first identified with Brahma, then the dreaming soul, and, lastly, the soul in dreamless sleep.

"How generally accepted the pantheistic theory must have become by the time the disputations at the court of King Janaka took place, is indicated by the form in which questions are put. Thus two different sages in the Brihadaranyaka (iii. 4-5) successively ask Yajnavalkya in the same words : 'Explain to us the Brahma which is manifest and not hidden, the Atman that dwells in everything.'"

"With the doctrine that true knowledge led to supreme bliss by the absorption of the individual soul in Brahma went hand in hand the theory of transmigration (samsara). That theory is developed in the oldest Upanishads; it must have been firmly established by the time Buddhism arose, for Buddha accepted it without question. Its earliest form is found in the Satapatha Brahmana, where the notion of being born again after death and dying repeatedly is coupled with that of retributio s Thus it is here said that those who have correct knowledge and perform a certain sacrifice are born again after death for immortality, while those who have not such knowledge and do not perform this sacrifice are reborn again and again, becoming the prey of Death."*

Yajnavalkya was one of the most important personages of India. He was a law giver, religious preceptor and performer of sacrifices of the famous kings Janaka and Yudhisthira. A gotra of that name was found among the Vasisthas.† He was identified with the Satapatha Brahmana, Yoga system of philosophy, and with the important task of revising the Mahabharata. The work of his uncle Vaisampayana was spoilt by him to demonstrate his theory of transmigration and he illustrated it in Draupadi's birth and marriage.

* Professor A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature" pages 222-223.

† Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition" page 237.

The Indian Epics represent that their heroines Sita and Draupadi practised religious austerities in their previous lives for ideal husbands. The so-called boons proved to be veritable curses in their life-long sufferings. It is quite evident from this that it cannot but be a satire. Whoever might be the author of the great Epic, he failed to see that if a god, who had granted the boon, could not comprehend and grasp the real intention of his worshipper, then he would not be worthy of being called a real god. The report of Draupadi's marriage with five men brought vile calumny on her and what is worse still, one finds in the Epic that the definition of a harlot is put in the mouth of Kunti as the wife of five husbands and it is the self-same Kunti who gives definite direction to the wise and virtuous Yudhisthira to make Draupadi the wife of the five Pandava brothers. It can be read only as a satire and nothing else.

Nor is this all. Kunti was called upon to raise children through three gods and when she was pressed by her husband to do more, then she gave out the definition of a harlot and denounced Madri's simultaneous connections with two Aswini kumars. The idea of high gods' connections with the wives of king Pandu who retired to the forest to practise asceticism, is nothing less than a gross blasphemy. It can only be either a satire or a high idea that when a husband should give up all connections with his wives they should think of God above, who would bless them with dutiful sons through their husbands by His divine dispensation. The Epic says that the royal sage had connection with Madri before he retired from the world. However, it must be said that "nothing improves by a translation except a bishop," as the well-known saying goes, so nothing improves by an improvement on a genuine original except where it was imperfect.

One cannot overlook the very significant fact that the numbers one, three, five, seven and nine were the marks of different ages of progress in the succeeding periods of ancient civilisation in India. There was one God and one Veda in the beginning, then three, then five, then seven and the last number in the digits is nine, with which the nine planets were identified ruling the human destiny. It is even now believed and followed that in order to undo the evil influences of planets they should be propitiated. People observe the eclipses of the sun and moon with great religious fervour even now. The time when the revision of the Mahabharata took place seemed to have been when there was a fancy for the number five. The worship of five gods still lingers to the present day in Hindu worship.

The ancient idea of a Hindu wife worshipping her husband in the form of a god is found and is piously observed by a good wife even

now. Her husband is the only god before a good wife, and when that husband happens to be a king he is worshipped in the five different forms of a god. This has been recited in the Shanti Parva, Chapter LXVIII, verse 41. It appears that five qualities and quantities were then found necessary for any perfect form of worship. The very god Siva who granted the boon to Draupadi was worshipped not in the usual form but in the five limbs of Siva and is distinguished by the name of Pancha Kedar, a well-known shrine of India. It has been shown that five qualities are necessary in a man for success, both in the material and in the spiritual world. The true implication of five husbands seems to have been to represent to the world the well-known account of the famous Nala-Damayanti, which is recited in the Mahabharata. It was a Svayambara form of marriage and five gods appeared before Damayanti in the form of her lover Nala, whom she wanted to have as her husband in preference to the gods. She made the right selection and was blessed by the five gods with eight boons, and one cannot miss the important connection with the eight forms of Gayatri blessings in the marriage of the famous wife of Vasistha, Arundhati, who was said to have been translated to Heaven as a star to guide the chaste ladies of earth, which are connected with the name of Drupada.*

Draupadi got the blessings of the five gods like Damayanti and was not separated from her husband on account of the cruel dice play but followed the Pandavas through their worst trial. The Pandavas stood united as one by her superior intelligence, self-sacrifice and devotion to duty, if not the highest tact and culture. Their enemies failed to separate them at the Dice Hall by all sorts of tricks and indignities. The old king wrongly understood the marriage of Draupadi, which is an instance of a dramatic stroke of great importance. He was abashed to find out his mistake that Draupadi was not married to his son Durjodhana but to Yudhisthira. Now he won her and all the possessions of the king Yudhisthira, yet the inauspicious signs made the blind Dhritarastra offer boons to her which might be read as the marriage gift after many years. Besides the old blind king after the end of the war was given an iron Bhima in place of real Bhima when he wanted to embrace him. The old man crushed it and the stratagem saved Bhima. All these are nothing but satire and dramatic scenes, quite incompatiable with the serious literature of the ancient Epic of India.

Marriage was not merely a political or social bond of royal families but it was an initiation and purification ceremony to enter the spiritual life to realise the divine love, the centre of universal love. It was for this that the three gods showered sacred waters on the heads of the

* Kalika Purana, Chapter XXIII, verses, 118—120.

married couple Vasistha and Arundhati with the significant Drupada Gayatri incantations. Kalika Purana mentions the marriage of the great king Santanu with the daughter of Hiranyagarbha in Chapter LXXXII. The beautiful features of the queen Amogha excited the passion of the great Brahma and from his sweat flowed the river Brahmaputra, whose sacred water expiated the sin of matricide committed by Parasurama. It would appear that the king Santanu was one of the earlier heroes of the Bharata Samhita and if the two accounts of the birth of Bhisma and Brahmaputra are read together along with the defeat of Parasurama at the hands of Bhisma for the great wrong committed by him at the Svayambara ceremony of Amba, who was sought to be married against her own will to king Bichitrabirjya, then it would appear that the king Santanu mentioned in the great Epic and the Kalika Purana were identical. It seems that Bhisma stood against Parasurama when he offered obstacles to the flow of the Ganges into King Santanu's kingdom. Santanu's marriage with the Ganges mentioned in the Mahabharata is nothing but a piece of metaphor, as she presented the son to the king who was practising archery on the bank and the Ganges came to the king after her disappearance.

Bhisma was a novel creation of the great Epic as an emblem of sacrifice on the marriage altar of his father Santanu, and Draupadi was the female picture of sacrifice, the emblem of piety and devotion to the great wrongs of her father and husband in relation to the establishment of the idea of universal love in the marriage function in the presence of the great Sri Krishna, who initiated her.

The two Indian Epics present different pictures of marriage ceremonies. Rama followed the example of King Dushamnta and went a step further. King Dushamnta disowned the secret marriage with Sakuntala and acknowledged it when the voice from Heaven was heard by the assembly. Rama exiled Sita even after the fire ordeal only to satisfy his subjects. Pururava and Urvasi's love gave rise to Aila Gita and Yajati Gatha and these raise the great question of ancient marriage from the very beginning, showing that it was a question of divine love and not earthly love. "Desires never die. They are not satiated by indulgence. By indulgence they flame up like the sacrificial fire with the combustible clarified butter poured into it." This is the essence of Yajati Gatha.

In the marriage of King Santanu with Satyabati, Bhisma was made to give a pledge that he would not claim the throne for his son or himself. Bhisma, Drona, Kripa and Kripi were orphans who were brought up by the king and became great warriors of the day. If they were not dismissed as fictitious characters merely introduced to develop the plot

with dramatic effect at a later age, then it shows that marriage was reduced to the low level of political and social union for ambitions of life or just to rise in the estimation of the selfish world. The marrigae of Draupadi has no relation to it. It is the opening scene of the great Epic. Sri Krishna was to demonstrate the great truth that marriage was the first and foremost initiation of holy, religious and spiritual life in contrast with a mere social bond of self and selfish ends. Draupadi was united with the five senses of the human body to illumine the dead energy by love. It is the fire which cooks the flesh and blood of carnality to prepare the nectar for the heart to realise the divine love through the universality of Panchajan.

Panchajan literally means the five elements with which the crea-tion was made. They are represented in the inert Purusha and the energy of the creator is reflected in Prakriti in Samkhya philosophy. The author of the dramatic edition of the great Epic presents the first thing of his creation in the union of Draupadi (Prakriti) with the Pandavas, the five elements (Purusha). Furthermore, it is said in Naya philosophy that one's chariot was destroyed and another's horse was burnt by fire and both of them were in great danger of being destroyed by the fire, but when they were united and joined one's horse with the car of the other they were saved; this actually was demonstrated in the marriage of Draupadi. The homeless Pandavas after the lac house fire were discovered by Draupadi and were united to recover the lost kingdoms of Draupadi's father and of the Pandavas. Sri Krishna and the Brahmanas are said to be the roots of the great Epic and the Pandavas appeared in the guise of Brahmanas and Sri Krishna upheld their cause. This is the prologue of the great Epic in the marriage of Draupadi.

Sri Krishna is represented in Hindu mythology as having paid the tuition fee of his preceptor sage Sandipon by recovering his lost son from the possession of a devil by the name of Panchajan hiding in the deep ocean and assuming the form of a conch. The conch made out of his bones adorned the hand of Sri Krishna and was used as a warnine sound to the fighters of their impending danger on the great field of battle of Kurukshettra. This paying of Sandipon's tuition fee by Sri Krishna by the recovery of his preceptor's son from the Asura Panchajan and the using his bones as the conch of divine love may be said to symbolise the devil's taking possession of the fruit of earthly love or passion. It is redeemed by the divine love of Sri Krishna and this Panchajanya conch of Sri Krishna heralded the marriage of Draupadi with Panchajan (five elements in the persons of the five Pandavas) which may be said to be an emblem of Panchajan or universal love in Draupadi's marriage.

Her marriage represents both the spiritual and material side. So long as earthly passion is the incentive to marriage, wrangling and feud go on as was actually witnessed in the mad fight and thrashing between the suitors and the winners, the Brahmin Pandavas. The marriage did not take place until and unless Sri Krishna came forward blowing his well-known conch declaring the Pandavas had won the girl lawfully, which signifies that Draupadi's marriage was a spiritual marriage and not an ordinary one in human form. The blowing of a conch and wearing a bracelet of conch are found lingering yet as important tokens of a wedding, although marriage has been stripped of much of its spiritual significance as well as of all its romantic associations. People now seek the sanction of law and custom with all their technicalities more than the blessings of Heaven to their matrimonial union. The bonds of matrimony are now worn more lightly than they were before, when women had more freedom and men had less authority over them, when there was no law to break the marriage bond to make another more convenient for enjoyment. It was not then a mere question of loyalty of a woman to a man and *vice versa* or their mutual affection and devotion to their children. It was then the relationship of sexes in the bond of unity on the basis of the moral, religious and spiritual training of Hindu society. It cemented the love and friendship among brothers and their wives and their children, which converted the Hindu home into the precint of Heaven.

Marital fidelity has been of infinitely varying standard. It has been an exclusive question to bind husband and wife under severe penalty to be only sexually faithful to each other, or a question of a husband's right to dispose of his wife and children in any way he likes. Wife-lending was a form of hospitality. An exchange of wives for prolonged periods is even now a legalised custom among the Eskimos. Pluto has denounced the exclusiveness of home in ancient Greece as vigorously as Mr. Bernard Shaw does now. Senecca said that noble women computed their years not by the calendar but by the number of husbands to whom they have read the drama of restoration. The spiritual matrimony with which Draupadi and Yudhisthira were bound weathered many a storm of life and presented to the world the strength and vigour of the blessing of the great Sri Krishna. The Indian Epic is not a love lyric but preaches solemnly that matrimony is not a mere question of strict mutual faithful sexual relationship between man and woman, for its hero and heroine stand on quite a different plane, with a religious and spiritual atmosphere.

In ancient times there were numerous instances where marriages seem to have been connected with the tuition fee of the

preceptor, or the sacrificial fee of the performer or the gift of alms to a great sage who sought the hospitality of a king. There is another significant fact connected with Samkhachura's marriage and death. Tulsi was the name of Samkhachura's wife and she was a noted devotee of Sri Krishna. The idea of chastity of the material world may be analysed in the story of Samkhachura. He had worshipped the God Vishnu and was rewarded with a good wife called Tulsi. The Asura Samkhachura could not be killed on account of the piety and devotion of his wife. At last, it is said, the Asura was killed when God appeared in His form and disengaged Tulsi from her religious austerities. Tulsi found out the fraud practised upon her and was going to curse the God when she was prevailed upon to follow her husband, which speaks of the cremation ceremony with which Draupadi was not identified. The difference between a material and a spiritual marriage is shown in the marriages of Tulsi and Draupadi.

The ancient Hindu system of four stages of life is well-known. One cannot marry before cempleting his studies at the preceptor's house to his full satisfaction and on payment of his tuition fees. Marriage has been the first entrance to worldly life. The trial of education, conduct and character begins with it. Naturally, the opening scene of the great Epic cannot but be a marriage.

The Mahabharata says that five Gods are reflected in the body of a king and so is ideal Yudhisthira and his relation with his brothers. He is one in five.

"Nobody obeys the king by taking him for a mere man for he is in sooth a great God in five forms according to different occasions. He becomes Agni (fire), Aditya (sun), Mrityu (death), Vaishravana (Kuvera) and Yama (who presides over the day of judgment)" Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter LXVIII, verses 40-41.

The five functions of a king are as follows:—Virtue, enjoyment, wealth, intelligence and friends and his five materials to increase his dominions are forts, battle, justice, policy and welfare of his subjects. (Mbh. Shanti Parva, Chapter XCIII, verses 12 & 24). Knowledge, courage, cleverness, strength and patience are man's natural friends and with the help of houses, precious metals, land, wife and friends the wise prosper. (Mbh. Shanti Parva, verses 84-85, Chapter CXXXIX.)

Everything was then thought glorified by its five-fold augmentation, *i.e.*, Panchadevata (five gods) Panchapandavas (five pandavas), Panchayajna (five sacrifices), Punchabhuta (five elements). Panchaprana (five vital airs of existence). Panchopachara (five items or paraphernalia of worship), Punchapita (five fathers), Panchaputra (five sons), and Panchakanya (five daughters). The famous five daughters are Ahalya, Tara, Mandadari, Kunti and Draupadi, the recital of

whose names are still revered and have efficacy in dispelling sins. It must be said that this fancy for the number five had something to do with the creation of the five husbands of Draupadi. The Indian idol of chastity, Sabitri or Sita, did not find a place in the names of the celebrated five daughters of India. The Ramayana account is quite clear that a Sita of gold is used in the horse sacrifice of Rama and the annotator of the Mahabharata, Nilkantha, cited Sabitri as an example of the technical offence of violating the marriage laws of the day by choosing her own husband, even though at the request of her father, (Anusasana Parva, Chapter XLV, verse 4) by implication only, but the Bengali translation of the Mahabharata by the late Kaliprosana Singha mentioned the name of Sabitri openly.

It proves beyond doubt that when the Pandavas flourished it was an age of a very advanced stage of Hindu society, of a very high standard of religious and spiritual upheaval. Marriage was not a mere question of going round seven steps with Vedic incantations with all sorts of ceremonies. The table of contents of the great Epic says that it assumed the position of the fifth Veda and heavier in weight than all the four Vedas put together. It does not mention the name of Draupadi anywhere among the heroines. The mention of the Drupada Gayitri in the marriage blessings on Arundhati, the example of ideal chastity, might have some connection with the creation of a character like Draupadi. No one knows what was the actual name of Draupadi as she is known by a number of epithets only. They were Jajnaseni, Panchali and Draupadi. There is no such epithet which can justify her marriage with five husbands.

It of course requires no serious thought or argument to prove the fallacy of anything unprecedented and unheard of in the well-known laws and customs of Aryan civilisation. One knows no more about the marriage of five husbands than about the man in the moon. It is quite possible that the Epic was revised in the days of Buddhistic ascendancy in India for this kind of marriage was only found among the Tibetian people. Nowhere in the civilised world has such a marriage ever existed. In spite of all sorts of attempts to obliterate the truth by converting the salient facts into the bone and flesh of a drama and a satire with flights of poetic imagination, the glorious and infallible marks of truth hall marked in the ancient customs and laws of Indo-Aryan civilisation of that period as well as the vestiges of truth in the incidents of lives and accounts still remaining in the Epic stare at the interpolations as glaring instances of inconsistencies of the worst nature. They are given in Appendix "A."

The Hindu world has been enlivened with a picture of domestic happiness in the beautiful woods of India in consonance with the bounties of nature as against the luxuries of royalty. The great author kept alive the simplicity of nature with the abstruse points of philosophy, morality and politics in the discussions in which the wise Yudhisthira and beautiful Draupadi were engaged. Here the grandeur of the Mahabharata, its majesticity and charm of learned discussions with the wise sages of the day, who honoured the Pandavas by expressing sympa thy and encouragement in their great trials of life, are made clear. Draupadi is shown and painted with the task of reading lectures on the duties of a good woman, which made her so divinely beautiful and peerless, so intelligent and resourceful, so dignified and majestic that she was idolised by the Pandavas from the lowest depths of degradation and slavery to which they had been reduced by the fateful dice play, to a queen of a Satyabhama's stamp and calibre, who was found fit to learn at her feet.

Draupadi's mothers-in-law were spoken of as having sons procreated on them by gods above. The idea in its literal sense, that gods like Indra, Yama, Sun, etc., would stoop so low as to have actual connections with the wives of earthly kings is an absurdity besides being a foul calumny. It could only mean that they were raised to the position of goddesses and were so cultured that even the great Vedic gods were anxious to have them. The Svayambara form of the new type of marriage tells a tale of its own. The peerless cultured ladies of India, as presented in the princesses of great royal families, were adored and received homage in the Svayambara ceremony of marriage from the five gods and great princes and kings of note.

Damayanti, Sita and Draupadi's marriages illustrate the form of worship called Gyneolatory in Ancient India. Women from the early Vedic days enjoyed full liberty in every respect and were honoured. They were highly cultured ladies and held in great esteem. Gargi prepared notes for the Veda and openly challenged Yajnavalkya in the royal court of Janaka, and Sulava outdid the reputed royal sage Janaka, mentioned in the great Epic, on the delicate question of Samkhya philosophy and the spiritual aspect of chastity. Many examples of women holding their own in every sphere of life can be cited from the ancient literature of India. The questions of the wife of Yajnavalkya, Maitreyi, form the subject of discussion in the Upanishad with her husband on the crude questions of the spiritual domain of life. There were well-known princesses of India like Rukmini and Subhadra, to possess whom the ideal god and man, Sri Krishna and Arjuna, fought, and they helped in the fight by the side of their lovers in the important task of charioteer-

ing. Draupadi was a perennial fountain of joy and love to the Pandavas in their worst miseries, so much so that the ideal mother Kunti speaks of her as being more dear to her than her own sons for the great qualifications and acquirements of Draupadi. (Udyoga Parva).

Draupadi was dragged most recklessly by Dusshasana, the most wicked brother of Durjodhana, to expose her publicly to avenge if possible the great insult the Kurus suffered in their defeat at the hands of the Pandavas, but Draupadi kept them at bay and released the Pandavas from their slavery by the mere questions of decency and law which exposed the mischievous machinations and foul play of the Kurus in such a conspicuous manner that the blind Dhritarastra was roused from his stupor to whitewash the whole thing by asking her to take boons from him. The sight of bad omens in the dice hall, when Draupadi was going to be insulted, speaks of the ancient Gyneolatory in India. The poet Milton, inspired with Hindu thought, makes God question Adam if Eve was his god in this manner:—

"This woman, whom thou mads't to be my help,
And gavs't me as thy perfect gift, so good,
So fit, so acceptable, so divine,
That from her hand I could suspect no ill,
And what she did, whatever in itself,
Her doing seem'd to justify the deed;
She gave me of the tree, and I did eat.
To whom the sov'reign presence thus replied.
Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey
Before His voice? or was she made thy guide,
Superior, or but equal, that to her
Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place
Wherein God set thee above her, made of thee,
And for thee, whose perfection far excell'd
Hers in all real dignity? adorn'd
She is indeed, and lovely to attract
Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts
Were such as under government well seem'd
Unseemingly to bear rule, which was thy part
And person, hadst thou known thyself aright."
(Paradise Lost, Book X)

Examples are not wanting in the Mahabharata about Gyneolatory. The fight between Bhisma and Parasurama for Amba is its best illustration. Draupadi was not only idolised by the Pandavas but by one of the heroines of the great Epic, Kunti. Mothers-in-law as a rule do not find something in favour of their daughters-in-law, but in the case of Draupadi it is just the reverse, as will appear from the Mahabharata. The conversation between Kunti and Sri Krishna in the great peace mission may be cited as an example of it. Kunti says that she was stung more by the insult to Draupadi at the dice hall than the loss of

her son's kingdom and everything else. Kunti idolised Draupadi so much and had so exalted an opinion of her wisdom, foresight and forbearance, that in sending a message to her son Arjuna she thought it most important to advise him to follow the advice of Draupadi in all matters.

Bhima, who carried his head high before everybody else and would not bend it before anyone in the world, as will appear from his admonition to Yudhisthira in Bana Parva, his offering to fight a duel with Sri Krishna in the Dandi Parva and his snapping at Arjuna in the dice play hall, was found to be a meek lamb and in a worshipful attitude before Draupadi; and though other Pandavas meekly bore the gross insult to Draupadi at the dice play hall, he failed to restrain his feeling of rage and openly took oaths to avenge the wrong by killing Dusshasana and Durjodhana. What Hanumana is in the Ramayana Bhima is in the Mahabharata, and they are said to be sons of the god of Wind and thus brothers. In the roamings and wanderings of the exile life, Bhima offered to carry Draupadi on his shoulder when she became unable to walk. Arjuna, while starting on his mission to learn and practise celestial weapons, saluted Draupadi and received her blessings like a junior. Nakul and Sahadev used to serve her in the menial duties of kneeding her feet, etc. Nor can one overlook the most important event in the dice hall, when the Omnipotent God pronounced his wrathful condemnation through the evil omens and portents.

It may be said without any hesitation that Draupadi's universal love was the guiding star of the Pandavas, and in later days developed into the well-known Radha worship of Sri Krishna. After all, the declaration of Draupadi by her name and marriage with the five husbands in the five elements of life are significant signs of Ancient Indian Gyneolatory. The example of Tilottama in the well-known story of the Sunda and Upsunda fight and destruction makes the point clearer. Draupadi's love and beauty were not in the nature of the ravishing flame of Tilottama or Sita. The poetry behind the declaration of this novel marriage may mean one thing, that all the Pandavas accepted Draupadi as the ministering angel of their household and empire and they were united with the bright example of her universal love betrayed for all equally. They were as subservient to her wishes and directions as a husband generally is to his wife.

Besides, stories are found in the great Epic extolling above everything the female virtue of chastity and one of them has passed into a proverb. "It is not a question of reducing a crane to ashes by a mere frightened look." The story in question refers to an actual incident when a successful Brahman of religious austerities got incensed at the

slight of a devoted wife whose hospitality he sought. The religious mendicant warned the lady of her conduct, whereupon she cracked cutting jokes at his power of destroying a crane by the sight of his rage. The hair of the mendicant's head stood on end with admiration as to how she had come to know of it. The author seeks to prove that the powers of chastity in a woman are in no way inferior to the Yoga system of Indian philosophy and belittled it that the imprecations and curses fall flat before the duties of domestic life, which a dutiful and faithful wife performs and which entitle her to the privilege of knowing everything better than a Yogi by his austerities and religious observances. For such an author of the Indian Epic to clothe ideal Draupadi with the obloquy and infamy of being the common wife of five persons, and that also brothers in the literal sense of the word, is an absurdity which need not be spelt out by elaborate arguments but is self-evident. It would be paying a poor compliment to the great author to think that, after painting such a beautiful and ideal portrait of his heroine Draupadi, he should besmirch it with the same brush.

It is well-known that the heads of wise kings like Yudhisthira and Ramachandra were raised with their ideal queens over millions of men and women as models of piety and love. The Epic authors paint the deeds of monsters of power and prosperity in glowing terms to belittle such powers before their heroes and heroines. Their followers laid down their lives on the religious battlefields to bring to justice the recusant rebels and resuscitate virtue, love and religion, the true attributes of Indian honour and glory, and were brought back to life again or given everlasting fame and rest in the region of Heaven above. The old traditions of the Deva and Asura fight in the sacred Vedas, Puranas and Samhitas were followed in the Epics. Naturally it is mischievous and playful to take these high characters of Sita and Draupadi at their face value without going deep into their real meaning and implications. Sita and Draupadi of the two well-known Indian Epics have never been the clay models of flesh and blood carried away by passions of love, but they have been worshipped for ages in the heart of hearts of all enlightened people of the world in the spirit of divine love which they demonstrate even now. The incidents of these Epics and their ideals did not stagger or perplex the great sages and kings who had a hand in the making of these important books of religion—a fact which should not be lost sight of in judging characters like Sita and Draupadi. The coterie of literary critics has been full of men like Goldsmith's Village Schoolmaster, who would argue still, and they also to prove what is true in their contentions paint more vividly the ulterior motives behind them.

The Indian Epics are not histories of an individual nation or country but of the religion of the Hindus in close relation with ancient glorious civilisation, and the leading spirits of the day and their respective influences, which shaped the destiny of India at large, are reflected in a glowing and vivid manner. The great historian Mr. Vincent Smith says :—

"The political history of India begins for an orthodox Hindu more than three thousand years before the Christian era with the famous war waged on the banks of the Jumna, between the sons of Kuru and the sons of Pandu, as related in the vast Epic known as the Mahabharata. The Epoch of Kali Yuga 3102 B. C. is usually identified with the era of Yudhisthira and the date of the Mahabharata war."

It must be said after all that the time for revision of the Epics is long overdue, but this cannot be done without the revival of real Hinduism in India, which is fast disappearing under the all pervading influences of Western education.

THE DIVINE LIGHT IN EPIC.

Literature throws light on the past. One of the apostles of the Gospel of Revelations said: 'The Night is far spent and the Day is at hand.' Without light everything is dark; no one can perceive what is beautiful and marvellous in the creation on the surface of the earth. The proud man cannot shine in the lustre of wealth, in the elegance of dress and in the splendour of equippage; the hero cannot show his prowess to acquire fame and success nor can the opinion or the imagination of the world be expressed in black and white. But there is another light, far more important and glorious than the ordinary one, which displays the rainbow in its various tints, the beauty of the landscape in its true perspective, the feature of divinity in the glorious picture of the awakened birds' hymn of praise to the celestial red morning glow on the blue mantle of the sky, the green field enlivened by flowers and vegetables with bees humming and dancing with appetite, passion and love. The place where this light dwells is the fountain of truth, the human literature of the head and heart.

Light, it is said, is the gift of God and cannot be the exclusive property of anyone. God has given mental faculties to man alone to make use of the divine light if he cares to develop it. No animal has the power of abstraction and concentration and of giving vent to its feelings or recording its experiences in language like man. Animals have some instincts, senses and faculties like man, but they are not capable of progressive improvement, nor are they endowed with conscience. Although they have memory, a sense of humour, gratitude, feelings of love and affection, they can seldom pierce the mystery of creation and realise the Creator through divine light and wisdom. The morning light comes from the East and is lost in the West. This is the divine dispensation and immutable truth.

Civilisation is the compound of good and evil and is the product of time. Sociability is inherent in the nature of man. Circumstances rule the weak but the wise use them as instruments to work out their ends. Affliction has a tendency to sober the mind, and to touch and soften the heart. The two great sources of good conduct are meekness to bear injuries and bounty in relieving necessities. India can boast of these in full measure even now. These are the two great characteristic

assets of Indians which must show that they were not in India as invaders or travellers. All men in their primitive state found impregnable the natural barriers of India. Experience and humility teach modesty and fear, on which, as the hymns of the Vedas declare, health of mind depends, and not the enjoyment of luxury or abuse of the senses. Every society in the earliest state consisted of two classes of men—industrial and active members of society and the experienced, who were the guiding stars of the industrial section and were honoured and esteemed. This is the origin of the Aryan and non-Aryan division of the Hindu race, described in the Veda as Devas and Asuras, respectively. The appellations of Daityas, Danavas, Raskhasas, Pishacs, Sudras and non-Aryans were merely terms of reproach to make people try and reach a higher standard of life in Aryan civilisation.

In India Vedas, Upanishads, Epics, etc., grew one by one in staegs. In the Golden Age of Satya Yuga there was no sorrow, no crime, consequently no rules of conduct, law of punishment and reward and religious institutions were necessary or enjoined. But in the Silver Age, such was not the case. Siva's "Tandaba" dance with small drum (Domuru) and Narada's stringed instrument were appreciated as appealing to the head and heart of the people to excite religious sentiment. This first idea of producing some such thing like music and dancing to give pleasure to the ears and entertainment to the eyes was then developed. The Rig Vedic hymns when they were sung came to be known by the term Sama; those recited in the sacrifices were called Yajus and the ritual text to provide against sorcery and the ancient belief in demons of diseases received the name of Atharva. The comparison of Brahmans to croaking frogs in their singing at their sacrifices was a method of expression to convey the magical power of bringing rain. Besides, the description in the hymns not only gives an important clue to the place where they were composed, but proves the musical powers of the frogs as well.

In the time of the Mahabharata there was no distinction of caste like that found in the Ramayana. The recitations of the Mahabharata were not accompanied by any musical instruments, as had been the case with the Ramayana. This, no doubt, speaks of the age of the Epics, apart from their literary composition.

"Samkara on Brahma Sutra, iii, 3. 32. mentions that Apantaratamas lived as Krishna Dvaipayana at the time of the transition from the Kali to the Dvapara Yuga.* "

* Professor Weber's History of Indian Literature. page 243 (foot note).

The Vedic scholar Weber gives his views about Krishna-Dvaipayana, Vyasa's identification with the authorship of Brahma Sutra and Vyasa Badarayana, as follows:—

"The Vyasa ought really to be identified with Vyasa Badarayana, though this appears to me at least very probable.*......The Epic poetry belongs to two distinct groups, *viz.*, the Itihasa—Purans and the Kavyas. The Ramayana belongs to the Kavya group and the author Valmiki is one of the teachers of Taittiriya-Pratisakhya, and Vyasa that of Taittiriya Aranyaka.† "

Vyasa and Valmiki were not known in the literary world so much as the authors of these books as they were of the Epics. All credit is due to the researches of Western scholars, who brought to light this important fact. Yet they could not reach any satisfactory solution as to the time and authorship of the Epics nor could they discover the original Epics as they were in the time of the original authors. Dr. Hopkins says:—

"In fact, the greater Epic, as it stands to-day, is so heterogeneous that only the most unhistorical type of mind could view all this heap of good and rubbish as the product of one uniform source. Such a theory has indeed actually been suggested, but it was too fantastic to find support and has wakened only a passing interest...... To turn from the finished product to the origin of these two poems, which arose far apart but ended in the same literary environment, of the source of the Ramayana there is little to say, for it is attributed as definitely and regularly to Valmiki as is the Æneid to Virgil, whom the Hindu author preceded by several centuries. Now tradition ascribes the great Epic also, that is, the Mahabharata (which means the great Bharata story and so may be called simply the Bharata), to a certain Vyasa: but this Vyasa is a very shadowy person to whom is ascribed also the arrangement of the Vedas and other works, his name meaning merely arranger or disposer."‡

The same writer admits that

"Vyasa, the Epic author and his rival Valmiki, are now gods in some parts of India, as are the heroes of their poems who have many shrines and thousands of worshippers. Finally, the ghosts of 'good' women Satis are regarded as 'new divinities' to cite the expression of the Abbe Dubois, who at the end of the eighteenth century saw some of these unhappy gods in the making§ ....Krishna is a by-name of Vyasa, the author of the Epic (in so far as the arranger of the mass may be called author) who, though not identified with Krishna as Supreme God, is himself divine, and is described as the unborn (that is, the eternal) and ancient one, the only son of God born of a virgin, very part virgin, very part (anca) of God (Mbh. xii, 350, 4,5, 51). ‖ "

All these statements are very interesting, coming as they do from an European scholar of great repute, but he should have seen as an unprejudiced scholar what his learned predecessors said about Vyasa

* Professor Weber's "History of Indian Literature" page 243

† Professor Weber's "History of Indian Literature" pages 191 and 185.

‡ Dr. Hopkins' "India Old and New," pages 68 and 69.

§ Dr. Hopkins' "India Old and New," pages 103-104.

‖ Dr. Hopkins' "India Old and New," page 159.

and his mother. The learned Weber in his note on his book "History of Indian Literature" says:—

"Vyasa's mother, Satyavati, is called Salankayanaja, and Panini himself Salanki; the Salankayanas are ranked as Brahmanas among the Vahiks in the Calcutta *Scholium to* Pan. v. 3. 114 (bhashyena vyakhyatam)." *

He should have seen that it is stated in the Mahabharata by the father of Vyasa, Parasara himself, that his son was born out of the boon of Siva. He should have seen that Vyasa and Valmiki were appearing in the scenes of the Mahabharata and the Purana as contemporary men. He should have explained why these authors were given the privilege of ascending to a position of divinity and immortality, as he said. They were Vedic scholars of very great repute and got the divine light and inspiration to compose the Epics, which were the scriptures of the Hindus. The Western scholars, who took so much trouble and spent their energy in studying Eastern languages and Vedas, Upanishads, Aranyaka, Sutras and Epics, are not blessed with the same divine light of Heaven to find out truth and discover the authors and their aims. The Epics are not histories. It is clearly said in the table of contents of the Mahabharata that the mystery behind the writing of Vyasa is so very difficult that even the master of literature, the son of Siva, *i.e.*, Ganesha, took time to understand what he was writing at the dictation of Vyasa. Ganesha is said to be the remover of obstacles and rides on the mouse, the great enemy of books.

Veda and sacrifice, syllables and speech, work and duty, morality and conscience, concentration and meditation and soul and spirit are the mediums through which the ancient Indians lived, moved, and had their being, to see the divine light of Heaven. They were not worshippers of any man or beast, angel or apostle, son or father, Sun or Fire. The quotations of Professor Wilson's Vishnu Purana will serve to explain:—

"Omkara is Vishnu the mighty, the substance of the then Vedas, the lord of speech, and by its enunciation those Rakshasas are destroyed. The Sun is the principle part of Vishnu and light is his immutable essence, the active manifestation of which is excited by the mystic syllable 'OM.' Light effused by the utterance of Omkara becomes radiant, and burns up entirely the Rakshasas called Mandehas." †

The name of the chief Queen of Ravana is given as Mandodari and the name of the great Ikshaku king is mentioned as Mandhata. Then the seven horses of the Sun's car are interpreted as follows:— "The seven horses of the Sun's car are the metres of the Vedas, Gayatri, Vripati, Ushnih, Jayati, Trishtub, Amishtub and Panktri."

* Professor A. Weber's "The History of Indian Literature," page 96-(101). Footnote.

† Professor Wilson's "The Vishnu Purana" page 222, Book VIII, Chapter VIII.

The speculation of the cosmogonic hymns of the Rig Veda is the starting point of the evolution of Hindu religious divine thought, which led to the concept of a Purusha-Visvakarma to the lay, Hiranyagarbha to the valiant, Prajapati to the sacrificers, and Soul to the wise Kapila to play the passive part of a spectator aroused from his slumber of rest by the primeval matter (Prakriti) undergoing successive stages of development.

In the Rig Veda the fight between Britta and Indra is recited as well as in Taittriya Samhita. It establishes the importance of the Taittriya books as recording incidents of a very early Vedic period and not after that of Yajnavalkya, as was wrongly interpreted by Western scholars. The learned Professor Max Muller interpreted the battle of Britta and Indra as the principal subject of the early mythology with which the Aryan forefathers saw the divine light.

"I look upon the sun-rise and sunset, on the daily return of day and night, on the battle between light and darkness, on the whole solar drama in all its details that is acted every day, every month, every year, in Heaven and in earth, as the principal subject of early mythology. I consider that the very idea of divine powers sprang from the wonderment with which the forefathers of the Aryan family stared at the bright (deva) powers that came and went, no one knew whence or whither; that never failed, never faded, never died, and were called immortal......Clouds, storms, rains, lightning and thunder, were spectacles, but above all others impressed the imagination of the early Aryans and busied it most in finding terrestrial objects to compare with their ever varying aspect." *........

"Nature in her twofold aspect of daily change, morning and evening, light and darkness—aspects which may expand with those of spring and winter, life and death, nay even of good and evil." The English Rig Veda translation by the learned Professor will convince of the mysticism of the name of the wife of Kasyapa, Aditya, whom, Pargiter found non-Aryan.

"Aditi, an ancient god or goddess, is in reality the earliest name invented to express the Infinite; not the Infinite as the result of a long process of abstract reasoning, but the visible Infinite, visible by the naked eye, the endless expanse, beyond the earth, beyond the clouds, beyond the sky." †

In the Rig Veda the hymn on the Sun (1st Mandala, 50 Sukta) is addressed as the divine light before the race of Gods and the commentator Savan interpreted Sun as the God Paramatma. The Sun has two mythological twin sons, Asvini Kumars, by Saranyu, the daughter of Visvakarma. The twins are supposed to be the physicians of the gods, who received oblations at the sacrifices through the good

* Max Muller "Science of Language," 1882. Vol II, pages 565, 566.

† Professor Max Muller's Rig Veda (translation) Vol. I (1869), page 236.

offices of sage Cyavana and his father-in-law King Sarjati, referred to in Vedic hymns, 1st Mandala, 51 Sukta. In the same Sukta, Indra is addressed as he who, by killing Britta, râised the Sun in the sky to be the observed of all observers. He brought forth rain for sage Angira and Atri as well. He used his thunder to save the sacrificer and blessed the sage Bimada with wealth and food. The annotator Sayan gives two meanings of Gotra, as he who brought rain or who discovered the stolen cows. Without Aranyaks, without Upanishads, without Epics truth could not be explained. It was Narada who first conceived the idea of preparing the Bharata Samhita, the source of the two Epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. This is clearly mentioned in the Narayana section of the Mahabharata, which makes the connection with Narayana Upanishad etc., mentioned in the quotation before.

That Vyasa and Valmiki belonged to the same time is clear from instances in the Mahabharata as being present at important assemblies, also mentioned in Debi Bhagabata, one of the 18th Puranas of the Hindus.* In the Debi Bhagabata it is said that by the grace of Narayana through the worship of Saraswati, Valmiki, Vyasa, Bhrigu and Brihaspati saw the divine light of knowledge and wrote their works of instruction to the world. Bharadwaja is mentioned as a pupil of Valmiki and the same Bharadwaja appears in the Mahabharata in a discourse with Bhrigu as his preceptor.

This synchronizes the question of time. Besides, in the Pratiskhyan Sutras of Black Yajus, Valmiki and Bharadwaja are mentioned in the list of teachers.†

The Bharata Samhita consisted of accounts of Gods and Asuras and the teachings of Sanatakumar, Narada, Narayana, Bhrigu, Bharadwaja and the ancient Kshatriya teachings handed down from Santanu in the discourses of various old kings and priests and in the advice of Bhisma to Yudhisthira, which was first compiled by Vyasa and subsequently enlarged at the instance of Janmejoya I and later on by Yajnavalkya and others. In the old pioneer days of Ancient India finding one's way through life was a very difficult problem. Many roads converged to one point, but not by a straight path. How shall one find his way to the right trail of life and avoid the wrong ones ? To show life's correct path was the great task before the Epic writers of India and they did it by vivid examples, so that a traveller of the earth might not come back to the place wherefrom he began his first journey without reaching the goal of bliss and eternity. The great Western poet Shakespeare said :—

* Debi Bhagabata, Canto IX, Chapter V.

† Prof. Weber's History of Indian Literature, page 102.

"All that lives must die
Passing through Nature to Eternity." *
"There's divinity that shapes our ends
Rough-hew them how we will."†

But Milton said, "Out of our evil seek to bring forth good." Western Sanskrit scholars like Max Muller etc., ascribed the origin of Divine light to Britta Samhara of the Veda and the Bharata Samhita, but that was not the true interpretation. The great Western scholars should have seen that the Eastern Vedic hymn-makers and sacrificers speak of three lights rather than one light of morning. The Sun and the Moon were made the progenitors of distinct races by the Epic authors and Purans. There were ten Gotras in the ten Aprisuktas of Rk. Samhita intended originally each for members of a different Gotra. The Lightstoma (Jyotistoma), Cowstoma (Gostoma) and Life-stoma (Ayustoma) are the three lights or stomas conducive to 'Hindu scriptural Heaven'. By the first the man on earth is firmly established, by the second the gods drove the Asuras away and by the third the gods took possession (Ayuvata) of the Asuras.

The ancient deities and sages of India are mythical. Purans give a long list of their pupils and descendants, but the founders of the families cannot be traced in chronological order. The Epics disclose their identities. Even the learned Pargiter is confused:—

"The earliest time at which a real Angirasa Rishi is alleged to have existed was in the reign of Harischandra of Ayodhya when Ajigarta sold his son Sunashepa as a sacrificial victim instead of Rohita, and Ayasa officiated as a priest at the ceremony."‡

There was but one Angiras, the progenitor of the family who described the shrines of India in the Annusasana Parva, Chapter XXV, which speaks of the ancient geography of India and lastly that the people went to the Himalayas, the abode of the gods and sages, to engage themselves in religious meditation in order to catch a glimpse of divine light and to throw off the transient mortal coil there. There is a discourse in the Mahabharata in 85th Chapter, Annusasana Parva of how the sacrifices were offered through fire and how the animal creation—animate and inanimate—was made. And, what is more, it gives the interesting mystery of the god-fathers of sage Bhrigu, Angira and Kabi etc., and their descendants, who were all born out of sacrifices but not by the fiat of will. This the European scholars have not perhaps noticed.

The relevant portion of the translation of the texts will be of interest. It will prove the worthlessness of all sorts of accusations

* Hamlet Act I, Scene 2. † Act V. Scene 2.

‡ Prof. Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 219.

against Brahma, Rudra, Indra and Brihaspati, Bhrigu and others about incestuous and illicit connections. It will also show that the aim of the Epic is to convince the world that God is manifest in His creation. One can feel His presence but cannot see Him with the material eye as an object. There is purpose in God's creation and the earth is not a place to satisfy one's ambitions and senses only. The mere intercourse between male and female does not bring forth children. They were sought by prayers and sacrifices with the true explanation given for their necessity. The gods and sages were not so many products of nature but they fulfilled certain functions of creation. Fire is the true origin of creation and it is in every element and without it even the gods cannot bring forth children. Fire helped Indra in killing Britta and in the case of Tarakassura the same help was sought, but fire hid himself and a game of hide and seek followed. The frog, elephant, and parrot helped the gods to find where fire was hiding and were cursed by the fire, one after the other. It was in volcano, submarine fire and in the branches of trees which cause wild fire. This truth of existence of fire-animals enlightened gods. The gods were then so ignorant that even animal instincts show the divine light which the gods did not possess. This is the important part of the work of the Epic which could not be done by Vedas and Vedangas, which adore the gods and sages so much in their hymns.

Vashishtha said:—"Formerly I also heard this history, O Rama, called Brahmadarshana, about the achievement of the Grandfather Brahman who is at one with the Supreme Soul. To a sacrifice performed formerly by that formost of gods, viz, the Lord of Rudra, O you of great power, who on that occasion had assumed the form of Varuna, there came the ascetics and all the celestials headed by Agni.... Brahman was pouring libations on the fire. While thus engaged, the Grandfather became worked up with desire. As soon as the seed came out, he took it up with the sacrificial ladle and poured it as a libation of clarified butter, O delighter of the Bhrigus, with the necessary Mantras, on the burning fire. From that seed, Brahman of great power caused the four orders of creatures to come into being. That seed of the Grandfather was endued with the three qualities of Goodness, Darkness, and Ignorance. From that element in it, which represented the quality of Goodness, sprang all mobile creatures gifted with the principle of action. From the element of Ignorance in it, sprang all immobile creatures. The quality of Goodness, however, which lived in that seed, entered both kinds of existence. That quality of Goodness is of the nature of Light. It is eternal and of it is unending Space. In all the creatures the quality of Goodness is present and is at one with that light which shows what is right and what is wrong. When the seed of Brahman was thus poured as a libation on that sacrificial fire, there came from it, O powerful one, three-beings into existence. They were three male persons gifted with bodies that partook of the nature of the circumstances from which they respectively originated. One arose first from the fire (called Bhrik) and hence he passed by the name of Bhrigu. A second came from the burning charcoals and hence he passed by the name of Angiras. The third originated from a heap of extinguished charcoals and

he passed by the name of Kavi It has been already said that the first came out with flames issuing from his body and hence he was called Bhrigu. From the rays of the sacrificial fire originated another called Marichi. From Marichi (afterwards) sprang Kashyapa. It has been already said that from the (burning) charcoals originated Angiras. The dwarf Rishis called Valikhillyas originated from the blades of Kusha grass spread out in that sacrifice. From the same blades of Kusa grass, O you of great power, originated Atri. From the ashes of the fire originated the twice-born Rishis, *viz.*, the Vaikhanashas, endued with penances and given to Vedic learning and all of excellent qualities. From the eyes of Agni originated the twin Ashwins endued with great beauty. At last, from his ears, originated the Prajapatis. The Rishis originated from the pores of Agni's body. From his sweat originated Chhandas, and from his strength originated Mind. Therefore Agni has been said to be all the celestials in his individual self, by Rishis endued with Vedic learning guided by the authority of the Vedas. The pieces of wood that keep alive the flames of Agni are considered as the Months. The juices the fuel yields form the Fortnights. The liver of Agni is called the Day and Night, and his fierce light is called the Muhurtas. The blood of Agni is considered as the source of the Rudras. From his blood originated the gold-hued celestials called the Maitradevatas From his smoke originated the Vasus. From his flames originated the Rudras as also the (twelve) Adityas of great effulgence. The Planets and Constellations and other stars that have been set in their respective orbits in the sky, are considered as the (burning) charcoals of Agni. The first Creater of the universe declared Agni to be Supreme Brahma and Eternal, and the giver of all desires. This is, indeed, a mystery.

"After all these births had taken place, Mahadeva who had assumed the form of Varuna (for his sacrifice) and who had Pavana for his soul, said:—'This excellent Scrifice is mine. I am the Grahapati in it. The three-beings that first originated from the sacrificial fire are mine. Forsooth, they should be considered as my children. Know this, ye god who range through the skies. They are fruits of this Sacrifice. ' Agni said:—'These children have originated from my limbs. They have all depended upon me as the cause of their being. They should, therefore, be considered as my children. Mahadeva in the form of Varuna has erred in this matter.' After this, the Master of all the worlds, the Grandfather of all creatures, *viz.*, Brahman, then said:—'These children are mine.' The seed which I poured upon the sacrificial fire was mine. I am the performer of this sacrifice. I poured on the sacrificial fire, the seed that came out of myself. He who has planted the seed always enjoys the fruit. The principal cause of these births is my seed. The celestials went to the Grandfather and having bowed their heads to him and joined their hands in respect, they said to him: - 'All of us, O illustrious one, and the entire universe of mobile and immobile creatures, are your offspring, O sire, let' Agni of burning flames, and the illustrious and powerful Mahadeva who has, for this sacrifice, assumed the form of Varuna, have their wish.

"At these words, although born of Brahman, the powerful Mahadeva in the form of Varuna, the king of all aquatic creatures received the first-born one, *viz.*, Bhrigu effulgent as the Sun, as his own child. The Grandfather then intended that Angiras should become the son of Agni. Knowing the truth, the Grandfather then took Kavi as his own son. Busy with procreating creatures for peopling the Earth, Bhrigu, who is considered as a Prajapati, thence came to be called as Varuna's offspring. Gifted with every prosperity, Angiras passed as the offspring of Agni, and the celebrated Kavi came to be known as the child of Brahman himself. Bhrigu and Angiras, who had originated from the fire and the charcoals of Agni respectively, became the procreators of extensive races and tribes in the world. Indeed these

three, *viz.*, Bhrigu and Angiras and Kavi, considered as Prajapati, are the progenitors of many races and tribes. All are the children of these three.

"Know this, O powerful hero. Bhrigu begot seven sons all of whom became equal to him in merits and qualities. Their names are Chyavana, Vajrashirshan, Suchi Urva, Shukra, that giver of boons Vibhu and Savana. These are the seven They are children of Bhrigu and are hence Bhargavas. They are also called Varunas on account of their ancestor Bhrigu having been adopted by Mahadeva in the form of Varuna. You belong to the race of Bhrigu. Angiras begot eight sons. They also are known as Varunas. Their names are Vrihaspati, Utathya, Payasya. Shanti, Dhira, Virupa, Samvarta, and Sudhanwan the eighth. These eight are considered also as the children of Agni. Freed from every evil, they are devoted to knowledge only. The sons of Kavi, who was adopted by Brahman himself, are also known as Varunas. Eight in number all of them became progenitors of races and tribes. Auspicious by nature, they all knew Brahma. The names of the eight sons of Kavi are Kavi, Kavya, Dhrishnu, Ushanas endued with great intelligence, Bhrigu, Viraja, Kashi and Ugra knowing every duty. These are the eight sons of Kavi. By them the whole world has been peopled. They are all called Prajapatis, and they have procreated many offspring. Thus, O chief of Bhrigu's race has the whole world been peopled with the children of Angiras, and Kavi and Bhrigu. The powerful and Supreme Lord, Mahadeva in the form of Varuna which he had assumed for his sacrifice had first, O learned Brahmana, adopted both Kavi and Angiras. Hence, these two are considered as of Varuna. After that the eater of sacrificial libations, *viz.*, the god of fire, adopted Angiras. Hence all the children of Angiras are known as belonging to the race of Agni.

"'The Grandfather Brahman was formerly propitiated by all the deities who said to him, 'Let these lords of the universe save us all. Let all of them become progenitors of offspring. Let all of them become endued with penances. Through your favour, let all these rescue the world. Let them become procreators and extenders of races and tribes and let them increase your power. Let all of them become thorough masters of the Vedas and let them be performers of great deeds. Let all of them be friends to the divine cause. Indeed, let all of them become gifted with auspiciousness. Let them become founders of extensive races and tribes and let all of them be great Rishis. Let all of them be gifted with great penances and let all of them be devoted to high celibacy All of us, as also all these, are your offspring, O you of great power. You, O Grandfather, are the Creator of both the celestials and the Brahmanas. Marichi is your first offspring. All these also that are called Bhargavas are your progeny. Looking at this fact, O Grandfather, we shall all help and support one another. All these shall, thus multiply their progeny and establish your self at the beginning of each æon after the universal destruction.' Thus addressed by them, Brahman, the grandfather of all the worlds, said to them,—So be it ! I am pleased with you all !—Having said so to the celestials, he proceeded to the place he had come from. This is what took place in days of Yore in that sacrifice of the great Mahadeva, that foremost one of all the celestials, in the beginning of creation, when he for the purposes of his sacrifice had assumed the form of Varuna. Agni is Brahman. He is Pashupati. He is Sarva. He is Rudra. He is Prajapati. It is well-known that gold is the offspring of Agni." *

All these are nothing less than miracles. No one witnessed the acts of creation. The presumed laws and the miracles are exactly on the same level. There is nothing to prove that what cannot be accom-

* Professor M. N. Dutt's "A prose English translation of the Mahabharata" Anusshasana Parva, Chapter LXXXV, pages 186—189, Slokas 87—147.

plished by man can be done by the Creator Himself if He wishes to do so to accomplish His end. The use of the miracle is to manifest the divine power of the Creator against the law of nature. It is designed to condemn the scepticism of unbelievers by direct proof of extraordinary things which are not capable of being done by anyone else but the Creator Himself. No science or knowledge can comprehend or explain its causes. The use of the miracle is to manifest the divine power and wisdom, to confirm the faith of the God's devoted apostles and followers. There is a miracle in every book of religion of the world and men like Locke, Chetham, Newton and a host of other learned men belived them and wrote on the subject.

Faith creates God, hymns follow. The Vedic hymn-makers saw the light of Heaven in the Rainbow in the sky in the hymn of Indra*. In this hymn the Asuras Britta and Sambara are referred to as being killed by Him. It mentions the seven colours in the Rainbow and the seven rivers of India. The divine light comes from the rays of the sun, the colours of the Rainbow, wisdom of patriarchs, sages and sounds of voice, which are all seven. Fire is represented as a horse, as it is in the Mahabharata Pousya Parva. There are two hymns on the horse in the Rig Veda (Mandala 1, 162 and 163 Suktas). In the hymn of the Rig Veda, 2nd Mandala, 38 Sukta, on the sun, the reference of weaving girls day and night is made exactly as is found by Utamka in Pousya Parva. This proves the study of the Rig Veda by him. This is the divine light which the Rig Veda throws and is reflected in the Epic Mahabharata. The Veda is said to have come from the mouth of the flames of the fire and received the name of Jataveda and, what is more, it is in the stomach of every living animal which digests the food it takes and that is another cause of that name of the fire.

The fire seems to be the chief creative principle. It is only reasonable that when force of will is combined with the principle of energy the principle of creation begins in the sacrifice. The parents sacrifice their own interests for the sake of their children. There is a sort of fire which consumes their own self-interest although the son is born in the flames of passion. Wish is the father of the son, and the sacrifice demonstrates the creative principle on earth. But when, beguiled by selfish love of sway, parents contend with sons, they fight. The infatuated fool disowns the author of the creation and feels no compunction in killing dear ones for the sake of possession of the earth. In the case of the Heavenly Father, who is not seen like earthly parents, there seems to be no obligation on the part of men, who revolt

* Rig Veda 2nd mandala, 12 Sukta.

easily without any rhyme or reason when anything stands in their way.

A man's heart devises his own way. God is far above all that is earthly. He neither instigates anybody to commit any sin or crime nor does he punish any transgressor himself with his own hands. The hardening of heart and mind follow when there is no check. The work of blind passion creates enormities of crime which give courage to the weak to combine and rise against the powerful. The cruel persecutions of a tyrant create a sort of horror against the perpetrator and the crime in the minds of people—which the human punishment of law cannot do. This is the purpose of the Indian Epics, *viz.*, to teach by example to shun the wicked and to emulate the good. The intelligence of a cultured people can invent more powerful weapons than the boon of God Brahma or the sacrifice. Sacrifice is not only the origin of creation in Hindu mythology but of granting boons to the Asuras, who performed it by all sorts of penances for that purpose.

Both the Asuras and the Devas indulged in the sacrifices and received boons. Brahma is sacrifice and it is he who always gave the boons to the great Asuras. When their persecutions became very great and unbearable, the Devas, headed by Brahma (sacrifice) approached Vishnu or Narayana to save creation from the exactions of the powerful tyrants. The powerful Ravana, Kartavirja-Arjuna, etc., were all killed by Rama and Parasurama, a man and a sage, through the divine dispensation which is nothing less than a miracle. The vast army of Demons after all were defeated by an army of gorillas and monkeys; the thousand hands of Kartavirja-Arjuna could not resist the power of two arms with an axe. This is the symbol of the power of God before the imagery of human power. The mere numerical strength of an army and the good generalship of well-known conquerors fail to accomplish even trifling things against the will of the Omnipotent Father.

The Epic conception of God is not that of the hymn-maker of the Vedas or of the learned sages of the Upanishad Philosophy, Aranyaka, etc., or the performer of the Vedic rites or sacrifices, but it is that of one meditative God Narayana who combined the Hindu trinity of gods and Vedas into one syllable, "Om," which is sufficient for the purpose of meditation and concentration of mind to hold communion with God above and the soul within.

The spirit of God is not discerned by every man. The majority of men are wholly blind with passion and selfishness. Science and philosophy seek the truth, culture and knowledge realise it when found, but

the soul of the man only can feel, if awakened, the communication and relation of the soul in the universe in common within him. No fear or terror of thunder can deter or blind the soul holding communion with the absolute soul of the vast universe. It confers such a strength as will conquer everything before it, however hard and difficult. A miracle is performed by Him at every instance. The great sage, who was reputed to have swallowed the ocean, could not kill Ravana but advised Rama to do it. He was then far too advanced to think of playing the demonstrator in the moral physical laboratory of the world.

One cannot get into the very heart-life of even a beloved and intimate friend and relation but one can touch and feel the most delicate omniscient. Being with every thought, motion and desire He catches minutely and accurately everything that is in the soul of His beloved devotee—this is the Divine light! What joy, peace and victory dwell in the heart of one whose troubles, worries and fears are all dissolved in the great ocean of Heavenly love and faith, where everything is but infinite and everlasting joy, peace and victory. God's angels have charge of those who have faith in Him and there were the seven apostles in the different cycles of time who were not ordinary mortals, the patriarchs of ancient Hindu Society that their births and spans of life would be like that of ordinary mortals.

Even now in India there are thousands of Yogis residing in the cold icy mountains of the Himalayas living for two or three centuries in the same state on the summits, which scientific men with all their modern appliances have repeatedly failed to do. Instances are not wanting of their performing wonderful feats which cannot even be dreamt of by ordinary mortals. There are instances of Yogis living many days beneath the surface of the earth or under water without being dead or decomposed, or even sick. The Epics demonstrate by their various examples of glorious kings and wise priests that the world's applause is a fleeting dream. The mighty kings of matchless prowess and sovereignity who traced their lineages to the Sun and the Moon now only linger in the hardly believed tales.

It is certain that the instinct of honour which is fostered in the breast of man is strongly appealed to when one is conscious of being nobly or heavenly born. This is the idea of the heaven-born sons connected with sacrifices and deities. Bhisma, who pays the debt of duty, has a right to relate his experiences. The arduous penances that have been practised by him obstructing fate for countless years drew the attention of the age as a marvel and invested him with the name of Debabrata, dying at will. By reading or hearing the Epics people

realise the fate of ambition, selfishness and glory, so that these may not influence them to do wrongs, especially when all will perish like their predecessors, the glorious accounts of whose actual accomplishments are now mere nursery tales. Such is the fate of ambition and glory in the earth below. The infatuated fool who calls the earth his own and fights for it, should see the results of the past in the fates of the heaven-born heroes.

One must realise that it is not worthy to waste energy and life for the possession of wealth or gratification of the senses, but one must try to conquer self and think of sacrificing one's own pleasures of the senses for the amelioration of suffering humanity. This is the gospel of divine light that the Epics preach to the world. The Epics, if rightly understood, are not sectarian books of religion as the Western scholars took them to be. The attribute of God Narayana in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata in the persons of Rama and Krishna against Parasurama and Balarama, who are called the incarnations of Vishnu, if rightly understood, will mean not only cultured men of divine energy and intellect, but will also speak of the difference between the Vedic ideal of Vishnu and his incarnation. In the hymn of the Rig Veda it is clearly stated by the commentator to be so in the case of the two great Pandava heroes, Bhima and Arjuna, whose godfathers were Wind and Indra.

Happiness springs from the act. The main purpose of life is action and not quality. Though manners spring from men's qualities, their happiness and misery depend on their own actions. God is not in any way responsible for this as He has given free will to man. Nobility is the virtue of a family of honourable descent and is in all nations greatly esteemed. Masses are led by fear. Poverty is transparent; riches are but a cloak for ills. Man is made of body, soul and spirit. It is good for a man to die before he has done anything worthy of death. He who commits no crime requires no law. It is not the counsel but the speaker's worth which gives weight to his speech. It is for this reason heaven's light descended from the mouth of the God Narayana himself to Narada, the divine minstrel, first in the Bharata Samhita, the source of the two Epics of India. Evil counsel is swift in its march and the majority of men are wicked as they have not the enjoyment of virtuous conduct. To make them feel the effects of virtue and vice, not by their own experience but by the fates of others, is wholesome and necessary. This is the task of the Indian Epics.

In the Epics the mention of law, customs, usages, and their growth and changes, give the world the vision of right and wrong with the change of time and ideals. The various examples and vicissitudes of life of various contending parties of Devas and Asuras, kings and priests,

brothers and cousins, of ruling dynasties, good and bad, virtuous and wicked, give an interesting insight into one God and to form an ideal life for steering across the sea of troubles to bear the hardships and sufferings of life in the so-called vale of tears. The divine light illumines the dark pages of destiny and makes man full of courage and energy to overcome the greatest difficulty with coolness and forbearance. This is what the ideal examples of Yudhisthira, Rama, Kunti, Sita and Draupadi teach. It is said, gods are upheld by Vedic sacrifices and men are upheld by the laws of the land. Narada, Bhrigu, Sukra, Bharadwaja and Agastya play many roles in the Epics.

The great Epic Mahabharata is described in the opening stanzas of the table of contents not merely as an Epic, but a Samhita, a Purana, a history, a poem and a book of social, moral, political and religious institutions and Upanishad. The Ramayana, on the other hand, is a poem observing the rules of grammar, etc. There is also a clear mention as to the origin of the name "Mahabharata"* in the history of the family of the glorious Bharata King Santanu. Dr. Hopkins' views on the inter-relation of the two Epics' final growth is very interesting.

"In regard to the final growth of each, it may be said at once that neither Epic was developed quite independently of the other. The later Ramayana implies the Mahabharata, as the later Mahabharata recognizes the Ramayana of Valmiki. It is not, then, a question of absolute separation, but only of the length we may go in separating." †......Long before there was any allusion to Valmiki's Ramayana, the base of the great Epic, the substance of the Bharati Katha, is recognised in Hindu literature; while the latest addition to the great Epic refers to Valmiki himself as a man who is to be. that is, who is already, famous, yacas te gryam bhavisyati, xiii, 18, 8—10. Between these extremes lies the Ramayana. The Ramayana recognizes Janamejaya as an ancient hero, and knows Kurus and Panchalas and the town of Hastinapur (ii, 68.13). The story of Pandus, the gist of the present Epic, is presumably later than the story of Rama; the former everywhere recognizing the latter as an ancient tale. We must therefore on these data make the following distinctions: (1) The story of Rama is older than the story of the Pandus. (2) The Pandu story has absorbed the Bharati Katha. (3) The Bharati Katha is older than Valmiki's poem.‡.. .. There is hardly a field in which Vyasa and Valmiki do not echo the same words. General descriptive epithets and phrases that paint the effect of grief and anger, or the appearance of city and forest; the aspect of battle and attitude of warriors, with short characterisation of weapons and steeds are all as frequent as the mass of similes found in both Epics in the same words. In the last category, identical similes are drawn from gods, men, animals, and physical phenomena. Again both poets, as shown above, use the same phrases of speech, as they do also of noises, and of the course of time; and finally there are many didactic verses, almost or quite the same in both Epics. In the list of parallels given elsewhere I have incorporated such examples as I have noticed of identical or nearly identical phrases and verses."§

* First book, Chapter 99, Verse 48, Mbh.

† Dr. Hopkins' "The Great Epic of India," page 59.

‡ Dr. Hopkins' "The Great Indian Epic" page 64.

§ Dr. Hopkins' "The Great Indian Epic" page 71.

The number of Slokas in the Bharata Samhita or the Mahabharata of 24000 Slokas coincides with the number of Slokas of the Ramayana. Professor Weber's views are as follows :—

"Now this allegorical form of the Ramayana certainly indicates, *a priori*, that this poem is later than the war-part of the Mahabharata ; and we might fairly assume, further, that the historical events upon which the two works are respectively based stand to each other in a similar relation."*

The whole of the 7th book Uttarakanda Ramayana and all the episodes in the first book of Ramayana contain mention of Narayana as the God divine, as it is in the Mahabharata. One very important fact is that Uttaram Charita represents the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana and not what Western scholars found to be the original Ramayana (the first six books).

Western scholars all thought that the Mahabharata related to the battie of Kurukshettra and to the Pandavas or Panchalas and Kurus, the two fighting factors of India. The Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, however, were not the account of battles of conquering heroes but a series of revelations in a connected link of instruction to the world with the mythology of the Devas and Asuras and the spiritual and moral instructions in the discourses of great men of the past. It was not a drama or Kavya in the beginning but an entertaining piece of literature, meant as a sort of instruction at the royal sacrifices on the distinct days of a sacrifice to distinct classes of people or on a distinct subject. The Bharata Samhita is the first Epic of India, sung by Narada in honour of Narayana after the Vedic period. In Kadambari, Narada's daughter is said to have followed the line of the father.

The Sanskrit literature, Kavya and Drama, of later date than the Epic, give better ideas of things of the past than the fertile imaginations of the cultured scholars, who tried to establish connection between the West and the East by all sorts of theory and dogma. The parallelism might be found striking and clear, but not always justifying a bold and sweeping conclusion. The people of India were never punished for the fault of their king, as happened in Egypt. The cruel persecutions of a tyrant, described in the Epic, create a sort of disgust and horror against the crimes he practised. Brittasura and Ravana are called a Dasyu and a demon, respectively. The enormities they practised served the purpose of awakening a revulsion against them by prompting the soul within. This cannot be produced by law, punishment or war. This is the important function of the ancient Epic, to bring into life and operation the

* Professor Weber's "History of Indian Literature," page 192.

dormant faculties of conscience and energies of the mass. The general depravity of the human mind and its propensity to do wrong to others are evident. The natural man does not inhale the breath of God ordinarily. The poet Milton sang:—

> "**** *** innocence, that as a veil
> Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone,
> Just confidence, and native righteousness,
> And honour from about them; naked left
> To guilty shame." (Paradise Lost, IX. 154.)

The Epics and Dramas educate the mass in the progress of time. The Drama owed its origin to the Epic. The Ramayana speaks of Rama and Ravana, and in the war the allies of Rama were beasts of the forest headed by sages and Ravana's brother, who was good and wise. Both the Epics represent Samkhya and Yoga philosophy and instances are not wanting of gods, sages and pious kings being translated to heaven, earth and infernal regions or transformed into beasts for any omissions or commissions or by curses. The reconstruction of the Vedic religion on the basis of an animistic theory is the work of time. All gods are derived from the memory of great men. Drama is the outcome of the reverence paid to the spirits of the dead and the performance was meant to gratify the dead. He who loses, is damned. This tells on the mass imagination more than anything else. It is consequently a victory on one side and death on the other.

Every one imagines others happy and is anxious to exchange his own state with theirs. Religion reversed this corruption of mind born of lazy habits. This state of things is more or less due to youthful excursions of the senses without restraint, which culture and education alone can confer. Knowledge alone can sober down the self-sufficiency and presumption of man. Examples better than precepts educate man in changing the habits of the mass. Ignorance induces one to follow the occupation in which one is born and bred and one's vision is circumscribed and narrowed down. One is afraid to move out of the rut. This narrow state of things the Ramayana depicts when Rama killed a Sudra for practising Yoga, but no such thing is found in the Mahabharata. This speaks of the age of the Ramayana, if the story is not an interpolation.

However, Epic poetry stands at the head of the old Sanskrit literature and is divided into two distinct groups: Purana and Kavya. The Yajur Veda is distinguished by the White and Black schools, containing as it does the formulae for the entire sacrificial ceremonials except Soma sacrifice. In the Aranyaka of the White Yajur Asvala is mentioned as the Hotar of Janaka, the king of Videha, and his Sutra is

called Asvalayana Sutra. Saunaka is said to have destroyed his own Sutra in favour of his pupil Asvala. There are numerous examples of the Ayana at the end of the Author's name, *viz*; Saundilayana, Latayana, Salankayana, Badarayana, Kalyayana, etc. This gives a clue to the time of the Ramayana's composition if not the name of the author himself. The Ramayana, at the end of the table of contents of the first six books, is clearly mentioned as Ravana Badha Kavya and not Ramacarita, as is mentioned in the Mahabharata by Bhargava and by Valmiki himself in Uttarakanda, 84 Canto.

The Uttarakanda Ramayana gives the installation of Rama and his Asvamedha sacrifice with the true incidents and his character fully depicted, which brought tears to the eyes of Rama's brother. It will be seen that Jaimini Bharata relates only Yudhisthira's great Asvamedha sacrifice and the Asvamedha Parva. It in fact describes the character of the Pandavas and their enemies in relation to virtue and vice. The fall of the Pasupat cult and rise of the Narayana cult is the aim of the Bharata Samhita. In the Brahmana of the White Yajus and Annusasana Parva, Tandya is mentioned as a teacher of the Pasupat cult and Ravana was his follower. Vyasa and Parasara belonged to the Pasupat cult, though descended from Vasistha. It was when Siva could not remove the affliction of separation from his son Suka, and Siva's boon of seeing the spectre of his departed son was all the more unbearable, that Vyasa sought Narada's help and was relieved. Narada's lesson to Vyasa's son made him ascend to heaven in person. Vyasa was eventually immortalised as being the author of the Mahabharata. His impartial and successful exposition of the Narayana cult made the world believe him to be an incarnation of Narayana. Benares was the centre of the Pasupat cult and there Vyasa's followers established the Narayana Murti, now worshipped as Adikeshaba, and Vyasa was idolised at the Palace Ghat of the Maharajah of Benares at Ramnagore, where people even now worship him.

In Uttarakanda it is said that the brother of Rama visited Cyavana and Valmiki. They were not different men but had different names in different places according to the changes in the modes of life. Cyavana was practising Yoga when anthills grew round him. Sarjati's daughter opened his eyes by striking them with a stick or her hairpin out of curiousity when she accompanied her father's hunting expedition. To relieve the king's equippages of an attack of disease by the curse of the sage, the king had to marry his daughter to the sage. This transgression on the part of Cyavana made him leave the place of his religious practices. It was when an incident having a close resemblance to this past experience occurred that he uttered the first Sloka in

penitence and grief—which was the neucleus of the Ramayana. He not only utilised the warning himself but wanted to leave a lasting warning to the world behind him in the immortal drama Ravana-Badha Kavya or the Ramayana, not to waste energy over the gratification of the senses like Ravana, who became so great a tyrant by the boon of Brahma or sacrifice.

Ravana lived a long life, enjoyed all that the earth, wealth and the gods could give, yet he was not happy and satisfied. His desire grew more and more. He envied the happiness of the exiled Rama in the possession of his beloved and devoted wife, Sita, in the forest. Ravana, with a thousand beauties of the world, found himself poorer without Sita as his own. The great author of the Ramayana Kavya wanted to prove that the mere possession of wealth, all the requisites of enjoyment and sovereignty of the world cannot make a man happy in the true sense of the word. Dramatists like Bhababhuti followed Valmiki to enrich the tendermost part of the human heart left untouched by him. Others followed to test the fidelity of Sita by placing the false severed head of her lord before her as killed by Ravana; but even that did not succeed. The more the tyrant was foiled in his attempt to seduce her the more miserable he grew, inspite of the array of beauties he had collected and enjoyed in his long reign. It was for this that Ravana was already killed with sorrow before being killed by the arrow of Rama. The curse of Rama stood in the way of Ravana's having his desire by using force. It is clearly stated in the Uttarakanda that Sita was looked after like a mother during her captivity (Canto 46, verse 54). Rama hallowed Sita by the fire ordeal, yet the calumny touched the pure Sita and for this Rama proved to the world that unhappy is the head that wears a crown, as he cannot please everybody.

The two Epics stand on different footings altogether; the Mahabharata is so vast and varied that its strata cannot be dealt with properly by the short mention of a few relevant points.

> "That the whole people should be taught and trained:
> So shall licentiousness and black resolve
> Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take
> Their place; and genuine piety descend
> Like an inheritance from age to age."
>
> —WORDSWORTH.

EPIC CHARACTERS.

In the new zeal to correct corruptions and abuses eating into the vitals of the growing nation, an attempt was made by comic sketches of society to avenge the slumber of ages under which the frame of society was then lying. There was no public mind, a few privileged orders of men, *viz.*, the rulers, priests, politicians, lawgivers and philosophers of the day constituted the public. The abstruse subjects of spiritual and ethical religion of love could not be imparted to the mind of the people passing from dark ignorance to the illuminating knowledge and gospel of truth. Whatever was great, venerable, true and holy suffered from indiscriminate excess. It was an age when all that was required was to convert what was feared as the most alarming evil into the greatest blessing that was ever enjoyed in the social state of infirmities and weakness. The hearts of the people required to be cultivated with some wonderful examples, which ministers of religion had hitherto failed to do. Thought and energy, so long dormant under the operation of ancient ecclesiastical systems of sacrifice and worship, needed rousing from the slumber of ages. It was felt that there was something beyond food and drink needed to support the body; the mind and the spirit of that body had to be made strong to guide and protect the receptacle, and with it arose the questions of life and death, joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity.

The world found in Ancient India a body of men all mind, energy and enterprise, capable of investigating all subjects to their inmost recesses, who presented telling pictures of justice, wisdom, science, skill, strength, love, art, patriotism and benevolence in Epic literature. Iron is as useful as gold, though in value they differ so much. The beauty of colours, the delicacy of sweet fragrance make the flower attractive, but the medicinal properties possessing no such attraction, make it equally valuable. Good and evil have their importance in regulating human society. Enjoyment of the senses makes a man or a woman either a beast or a god. It was not understood how one could improve the quality of the heart and control the mind in the exercise of the senses over the body without experiencing the results of good and evil. The development of habits, feelings and thought operate as powerful ingredients in personal and relative character as well. The worst characters have the least control over their sordid appetites

and rush headlong, irrespective of evil consequences. It was the result of not being schooled properly.

None can foresee that the good pursued is not an evil in disguise. This the Epic describes in Rama leaving Sita to hunt a golden deer in the woods, Yudhisthira being blind to the mischievous machinations of the Kurus and playing dice at the Kuru Court on an invitation and staking and losing everything there. It is a tax on greatness. It is concomitant with greatness, just as satires and invectives formed the essential parts of Roman triumphs along with the arches below which the victorious army passed in glory with a chain of prisoners of war. Jealousy and suspicion are the outcomes of selfish enjoyments and passion is the root of all earthly troubles and miseries. There are characters regarded as the special features of human and divine love. Universal love cannot be realised without attaining the state to which Yudhisthira arose and which Draupadi administered.

Sri Krishna.

The earthly scenes which make the relations of this world so sweet and loving are really dear and memorable. In actual life very profound relations are often perpetuated in memory. The preceptor or the parents who interweave their influence with the daily routine of existence can hardly be forgotten. To observe him, imitate him and love him was the best means of consecrating his connection. In every age a man of intelligence must guide the masses. All great men came out of darkness without knowing their future. Time is so sure a destroyer that anything rescued from its dissolving touch is looked upon in the light of a trophy. One gazes upon the religion of one's forefathers with its history and philosophy, its growth and advancement which have rivetted the attention of the greatest scholars of the world, with a feeling of great reverence. The inherent grandeur of the philosophy of love and religion is imbedded in the life and history of Sri Krishna. The poetry of many unrivalled geniuses, the sublimity and majesty of their conceptions, have attracted the attention and admiration of many ages and enriched their literature with new angles of vision. Brilliant men shine like the lustre of lightning which dispels the clouds that obscure the sun behind them.

Love is the creative principle in the material world. It is a divine attribute. Matter is sublime and beautiful when it is significant of mind, *i.e.*, where pleasure is subordinated to the moral purposes of one's being. Death is the only reality in life to beasts and human beings who are engrossed in the enjoyments of polishing their manners and disguising their faults instead of reforming the heart by following in the footsteps of great men or glorious sages. It is quite easy for men and

women to screen themselves from the penalty of human laws, but there were no such false beings in Ancient India. Not only men and women but even their Vedic gods gladly revealed their sins and shameful conducts and performed penances or made expiations. Ancient Hindu Laws were not made to punish evil transgressors, but Epics and Puranas describe the people's self-imposed punishments for their trivial and technical offences. It was for this that kings often overlooked such transgressions which, at a later age, came to be construed as meaning that the Brahmans were exempt from punishment. When resentment against sin and conception was recognised to be legal, the great deeds of men in the lofty chronicles of bygone days were used by great poets and rhapsodists to present to the world the ideas and theory of ancient chivalry, honour, virtue and religion, and the great ideal man, Nara or Narayana, was worshipped not in the sacrifices of Vedic formulae but in the heart of hearts of India for his unique character of wisdom, learning, observances, love, humanity and heroism.

When the conception of a philosophic godhead of Narayana was not easily realised and understood by men, Sri Krishna was found to be just the suitable God for the purpose. Sri Krishna is not an image of meekness nor does he represent the submissive love of Jesus Christ. What is there in the nature of a loving infant that breathes of heavenly simplicity and love? Its trustfulness makes a child hide its face in the breast of its parent and clasp its little arms around her neck. Commonness of enjoyment is the secret of brotherly love. This is the law of evolution of the divine purpose in the history of creation and religion. The theology of love is the logical complement of the theology of fear. A child does not hesitate for a moment to trust everyone in the love of God who has made every creature on earth mutually trustful and dependent upon mutual labour. Every one trusts himself and his dear ones to the laws and organisations. Dangers, injustices, asperities and uncertainties all disappear before the God-illuminated trust. The law of trust permeates the animal kingdom and faith rules the human heart. Faith and want are the first requisites to put the mind in a fit state to receive spiritual help from above. The material world claims but a tacit submission. The spirit of God, growing with divinity, would be impervious to the love of wealth and power.

Love alone gives the power of perception of all spiritual realities. Prayer, sacrifice or worship without true love, either to an abstraction or to an idol of flesh and blood, cannot make one realise the love of God or make one advance a step forward in the spiritual domain. Prayer without love and knowledge is nothing less than a farce. Faith and love are the essence of effective prayer. Self-knowledge is the first

stepping stone to knowledge of God. The devotee must be eager to know what are the attributes of God and where He is. The eternal God is not to be realised in the way a man or a woman think of one another in the pursuit of selfish love and motive. The Indian Epic demonstrates the ways of God and man and their mutual relations in the sphere of life and existence and nothing else. If the truth be told, Sri Krishna is neither a redeemer like Christ nor a philosopher like Kapila, nor a prophet in the true sense of the word. He is the man of action and spirit showing the world the power of universal love in the material, religious and spiritual world. He is not a practiser of Vedic sacrifices nor the propounder of any religion or theory of philosophy, as aimed at in Gita and Upanishad, Vedanta and Samkhya.

Geometrical truths are discovered through axioms and postulates and scientific discoveries are made through observation and knowledge, but historical facts are elucidated through progressive civilisation, customs, manners and religion. Philosophy and theology are the outcome of culture and devotion. The Yoga system gives prominence to application, but Samkhya devotes itself to analysis and close connection and Vedanta and all other philosophies are mere developments of Yoga and Samkhya philosophies. Epic literature makes the dry subjects of all these philosophies and theology interesting and attractive by examples and scrutiny, making due observations for clearing up difficult questions. Ancient India was independent and each man and woman was also. The duty did not come to be realised by the primitive male or female. Necessity required certain things to be observed for their very existence. One must eat, drink and sleep. Nature wants it and not God. It must have struck the great author of the Samkhya philosophy when he said the creation depended more upon nature than upon God. Nature makes one feel the need and then supplies it. Observation and intelligence guide one to utilise everything. Nature provides and improves upon it. The bird makes its nest and feeds its young. Animals and birds have instincts and some have intelligence. Domesticated animals display more aptitude for it.

Man owes everything to his brain or intention. Christians believe that God created man after his own image, but the Hindus do not. Hindus think that between God and man there can be very little resemblance. One man is dependent upon another, but God is not. He is omnipotent and his son is equally so. He is above all human conception. There can be no attribute or likeness which can convey His greatness to any human creation. He, who says : 'I know Him,' is as ignorant as one who says 'I know Him not'. This is the finding of the

authors of Upanishads of Ancient India. As regards theology, there can be theory, but Hindus believe in the practice of such a theory. Samkhya and other philosophies exult in high thinking and plain living, but do not demonstrate the truth behind them. It remained a masonic secret till it was discovered through human love how to realise divine love. It is not the poet's imagination or the philosopher's stone or wise man's saying, but it is the response of the heart within and the heart without in the midst of the unknown which rules the universe. It is not concentration of mind by Yoga; it is something much higher than that. It is not the blind faith of a believer in the prophets of God or His son; it is the reciprocation of feelings between humanity and divinity. It is not the sacrifice to gain some end or service or propitiation, but the ultimate happiness in realising the greatness of God in His universal love displayed in creation.

The services of parents to their children are as unselfish as those of God above. Is it Nature or God who provides milk in the breast of a mother before she gives birth to her child? What makes a man run to help a man in difficulty or in the grief of death without even his calling for help? In flood and fire even the sick forget their maladies and get strength to be of service to suffering humanity. The presence of God and His goodwill one can find—this is called unselfish love, as when one swims and risks one's own life to save a drowning man. The creation needs such help every moment and the Almighty Father renders it. Universal love is the attribute of God. Love makes one undertake things beyond one's power, which reveals the omnipotence of God above. Love feels the presence of a lover even when absent; difficulty and death are felt through the ministration of mutual attachment, and sometimes one hears Him speak when such is the feeling towards God. God is demonstrated to man. People call it halucination. It is through love that God reveals Himself to man.

Sri Krishna was such a man, in whom God was not only revealed but came to be united. He was not an incarnation to perform some act but represented universal love for all. Those who loved God saw Him, but those who feared God and blasphemed Him, lost their lives not at His hands but through the circle of time represented in his Disc (Chakra), the great weapon of God. God is full of love and destruction is also the work of love. Men and beasts eat what they love, but what they hate they throw away. Death is not an enemy of love. Love gives peace and so does death. God is thus creator of the universe and its destroyer. Love preserves its creation too.

Sri Krishna worship has been the aim of the current great Epic. The mysterious faculty called love is the eye of the soul, and culture

and wisdom are the light which leads men to seek the steps of Heaven. The all absorbing love and the childlike simplicity of Sri Krishna while in the place of Jashoda and Nanda are nothing but sparks of true love for God above, the Creator of the Universe. There has been no blind ignorance which makes one pray to one who is not divine for earthly success. The poet describes this in the killing of the enemies of the children Baka and Putana. Sri Krishna's life has been painted like that of a man conscious of his own powers to lead and command, even, if necessary, to conquer all who stood against his loving service to God above and man below. The test of true genius is to conquer the temptation of worldly enjoyments and dominions. He left the place of his love-making, Brindaban, before the age of puberty, and killed Kamsa and released his own parents, but did not accept the kingdom of Kamsa which was given to Kamsa's father. He who can overcome these greatest temptations of the world, *viz.*, kingdom and women's love, can see the unfailing love and grace of Heaven.

Sri Krishna stood the acid test in leaving Brindaban, the place of his early exploits for good, killing Kamsa at Mathura to liberate his parents as well as to instal Kamsa's own father Ugrasena on the throne which had been usurped by his cruel and unfaithful son. He refused to ascend the throne of Kamsa when the same was offered to him. This made Sri Krishna famous. The table of contents of the great Epic distinctly says that it describes the greatness and glory of Sri Krishna.* Sri Krishna appears first in the great Epic at the Svayambara of Draupadi to denounce and expose the dark plot of the Kauravas to destroy the Pandavas. The Svayambara ceremony of Draupadi's marriage heralded the discovery of the Pandavas, hitherto unknown to the world or believed to have been destroyed in the fire of the lac house at Baranabata. The visit of Vyasa and Sri Krishna to the secret hiding place of the Pandavas; the conversation between Balaram and Sri Krishna at the Svayambara Hall pointing out the Pandavas and the word of advice of Draupada at the farewell of the Pandavas after the marriage give a clue to disclose Sri Krishna's hand in the marriage ceremony of Draupadi and explains the success of the Pandavas in coming into the limelight of chivalry and glory before the Royal Assembly.

The personality of Sri Krishna from the very beginning of the great Epic appears as the embodiment of great power, ability and success, combined with great forbearance and love for what is good and just. Through the whole Epic he figures as a godly character, ever striving to uphold the just and the right and denouncing and

* Adi Chapter 1, verse 100. Mahabharata.

dethroning the wicked and cruel. The great Epic depicts him as an eminently just and impartial arbiter, not taking any active part on either side, but equally helping both sides, one with his invincible legions and the other with his sage counsels according to the choice of each party. He possessed sufficient power and military strength to coerce the Kauravas to yield their just share to the Pandavas, but he forebore from using force and explored all avenues for attaining peace by gentle persuasion only. Though mighty in arms he himself condescended to undertake the humble mission of a peace messenger. Though he met with an outrageously haughty repulse from Durjodhana, who actually thought of making him a prisoner, Sri Krishna did not harbour any feelings of revenge but with superhuman generosity lent him the assistance of his whole army, which Durjodhana sought. Through the efforts for peace and amity between the Kurus and the Pandavas, amid the din and uproar of the great war and its horrible carnage, in the falls of heroes and successes and reverses on either side, Sri Krishna stood quite unaffected. He first became famous as a powerful hero and next an upholder of a just cause, and then came to be regarded as a dispenser of universal love to friends and foes alike, and finally appeared enthroned as the divine God of universal love in the lamentations of the fallen heroes in the field of the great war and in their last rites.

His love is disinterested love, untrammelled by considerations of personal interest or affinity of relation. And he evoked the same selfless love in everybody he came in contact with. The Epic presents him as the fullgrown hero and king blessed with the conjugal love of his sixteen thousand married wives. His pre-Epic childhood life, when he dispensed universal love to all boys and girls, with whom he had no personal relation or community of interest, and kindled similar universal love in them, best depicts his godly, universal love and therefore in his worship his childhood (Brindaban life with Sri Radha by him) has been chosen by his countless worshippers as the best image of worship and that is why neither his kingly manhood image of power and grandeur of the active Epic period nor his old age sage and savant image of the closing Epic period have been idolized by the Krishna worshippers, *i.e.*, the Vaishnavas. That is why Sri Krishna and Radha are popular forms of the images of Sri Krishna worship.

During the Epic period Narayana worship had obtained ascendancy and was the predominant cult. In the course of the Epic we find Sri Krishna's divinity gradually unfolding and manifesting itself and in the end Sri Krishna is found as the incarnation of God Narayana Himself—rather than any partial or full avatar of Him—and Sri Krishna worship

gradually supplanted Narayana worship, or rather, coalesced with and became identified with Narayana worship. Sri Krishna was found to be Narayana Himself and in worshipping Him, Narayana was believed to be worshipped.

The whole object and purpose of the Epic was to bring out this idea—the triumph of universal love and sage counsel over immoral brute force. Sri Krishna, the incarnation of universal love, and his sage counsel was on the side of the Pandavas and the whole of Sri Krishna's invincible army was on the side of the wicked Kurus, and the great Epic works out the triumph of the former over the latter though Sri Krishna never took up his invincible weapons or fought on the side of the Pandavas but simply charioteered them, which is emblematic of guiding them with sage counsel.

Arjuna's address to Sri Krishna at their parting is very interesting:—

"Vaishampayana said:— O Janardana! Highly wonderful is this which you have done from desire of doing what is agreeable to us, *viz.*, the destruction in battle of the Kaurava (prince), the son of Dhritarashtra. That army had been burnt by you which I (subsequently) defeated in battle. That feat was achieved by you on account of which victory became mine! By the power of your intelligence was shown the means by which was duly effected the destruction of Durjodhana in battle, as also of Karna, as of the sinful king of the Sindhus, and Bhurishravas.*

Yudhisthira eulogised Krishna's services and bade him adieu with rich presents as his elder brother.

" Yudhisthira said: —Do you then go, taking with you various kinds of gems and various sorts of wealth. Do you, O hero of the Satwata race, also take with you whatever else you like. It is through your grace, O Keshava, that the whole Earth, O hero, has come under our sway and all our enemies have been killed.†

It is significant that after the war Sri Krishna gladly accepted Gandhari's curse.

" Gandhari said:—'On the thirty-sixth year from this, O destroyer of Madhu, you will, after bringing about the death of your kinsmen and friends and sons, perish by disgustful means within the forest. The ladies of your family, deprived of sons, kinsmen, and friends, shall weep and cry even as these ladies of the Bharata family'. Vaishampayana continued:—Hearing these words, the great Sri Krishna, addressing the worshipful Gandhari, said to her these words, smilingly, 'There is none in the world, save myself, who can exterminate the Vrishnis. I know this well. I am trying to bring it about. In imprecating this curse, O you of excellent vows, you have helped me in the accomplishment of that work. The Vrishnis are incapable of being killed by others, whether human beings or gods or Danavas. The Yadavas, therefore, shall be killed by one another'. After the Dasharha hero had said so, the Pandavas became stupefied. Stricken with anxiety, all of them became hopeless of life.‡......Krishna said:—'Arise, arise, O Gandhari, do not grieve. Through your

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* The Mahabharata, Asvamedha Parva, Chapter LII, verses 15—20.
† The Mahabharata, Asvamedha Parva, Chapter LII, verses 49—50.
‡ The Mahabharata, Stree Parva, Chapter XXV, page 27, verses 44—49.

fault, this huge destruction has taken place. Your son Durjodhana was wicked, envious, and exceedingly arrogant. Praising his wicked acts, you thought them to be good. Highly ruthless, he was the embodiment of hostilities, and disobedient to the commands of the old. Why do you then attribute your own faults to me? Dead or lost, the person who grieves for what has already taken pla·e, suffers greater grief By grieving one increases it two-fold. A saintly woman bears children for the practice of austerities; the cow brings forth off spring for bearing burden; the mare brings forth her young for acquiring speed of motion; the Sudra woman bears a child for increasing the number of servitors; the Vaishaya woman for increasing the number of keepers of cattle. A princess, however, like you, brings forth sons for being killed."*

Durjodhana did not openly listen to the wise counsels of his beloved parents and his well-wishers. His own feelings were his only guide. He did not dread death and disgrace as long as he was in possession of the kingdom and in the enjoyment of pleasure. This was patent from the reply he gave to Sri Krishna on his mission of peace. He overstepped all decency of conduct and rules of court to which the elders took strong exception. He had no command over himself and did not subject himself to any rule of discipline. If such a man and his followers are worthy of notice in an Epic called great, then the man who holds such a view must hang his head in shame. It has never been consistent with the ancient Hindu ideals with which the book was originally composed by Vyasa, one of the law givers of Ancient India. The past and its remembrance have important lessons which the Epics record to afford pleasure in the thought of those who suffered and established the kingdom of peace and loved instead of raising inordinate cravings of flesh and blood.

There must be the lesson of wisdom and humility in the presence of the spirit of God, the ethic of morality and love which leads man to eternity. Peace is the result of a disciplined and cultured mind where the spirit exults ; when that spirit is united with the Universal spirit the question of eternity arises. This is the order of progress from the moral sphere to the spiritual ascendancy of eternity. Man alone can do much for himself as he is placed in the midst of ever changing incidents and events of life. It is the knowledge and power or the heart within a man which gives him peace in faith, trust and love of Him whom the heart yearns to meet, and the meeting place is that universal love which does not fight in the field of battle but only watches and helps the good.

Sri Krishna represented universal love and Yudhisthira the disciplined and cultured mind in whom the unity of the universal spirit of love met and led him to eternity. This is the solution of the plot which Vyasa conceived and displayed in his great work.

* The Mahabharata, Stree Parva, Chapter XXVI, page 28, verses 1—5.

Sri Krishna, the king-maker of Ancient India, whom the Mahabharata describes as the ideal hero of love, learning, intelligence and justice, first appeared subservient to God Narayana and then became an emblem of universal love. The empire of love, which he conceived in Brindaban in his younger days, he established at Dwarka under a firm roof in the kingdom of Yudhisthira, whom he established by his good counsel and superior wisdom.

The country was fully alive to the importance of virtuous principles and introduced strictness into its morals by the punishment inflicted in the great war of reform. Sri Krishna with the Pandavas established the power of guardians and parents over tyrannical sons like Karna and Durjodhana and placed the kingdom in the hands of their fathers. Dhritarastra expressed his satisfaction after his great bereavement at the fearful war by saying that he had not enjoyed such happiness during the reign of his son as he experienced during that of Yudhisthira. The benumbed senses were enlivened with a variety of energetic and subtle powers for which Sri Krishna was translated to the idea of perfect godhead and the Pandavas demi-gods. Sri Krishna was the ideal God of love, his heroic sister Subhadra was given to Arjuna, the glorious Draupadi went to Yudhisthira, and Sri Krishna himself ruled the heart of all the maidens of Brindaban so that even when they were married they could not derive that pure delight which they experienced in their maidenhood in the exploits with Sri Krishna.

The field of the great battle of Kurukshettra is described as the place where the fight for religion took place, and the great incarnation of God was Sri Krishna, who was not a wielder of arms or a fighting hero but the charioteer of a hero, Arjuna, his brother-in-law. The moral of the great Epic seems to have been that success follows virtue and Sri Krishna. He was the great receptacle of love which in youth ignited the hearts of the fair maidens of Brindaban, united in ties of marriage with thousands of royal princesses and kept them in peace in Dwarka, and gave birth to innumerable heroes, amongst whom was Cupid, the God of love. Gandhari, queen mother of the Kurus, on behalf of the widows of the fallen heroes on the battlefield, cursed Sri Krishna for not preventing the cruel carnage and the miseries of thousands of unfortunate girls who lost their husbands and children. Sri Krishna in order to appease their grief by practical demonstration, accepted the curse gladly that all earthly creation is liable to destruction except the true spirit of love. This is the true philosophy of love and divinity enunciated in the great field of battle of Kurukshettra. In world politics and religion the ideal Narayana and Nara were at first represented by Sri Krishna and Yudisthira, who died without a successor,

The river Jamuna is the stream of love where Sri Krishna and Radha had their first love lessons with the flute of the heart which resounded through Brindaban. The thousand-headed hydra of envy and malice Kalia was controlled by Sri Krishna—a feat sufficient to make him ascend to the throne of heavenly love. He dethroned Indra by stopping the worship of Indra and introduced and enjoined the feeding of the cows and worshipping the hill Govardhana. From the speech of Sri Krishna it is evident that Brindaban was a Gopa settlement. He first demonstrated to the people there how men and women and children should be taught the first lesson for elevating their hearts from the darkness of superstition to the active beneficience of distributing food and drink to the needy and to enjoy the bliss of unselfish observance of duty.

The grounds for giving Sri Krishna the place of honour and worshipping him with Padya and Arghya in the Raj Suya sacrifice, is given as follows :—

"We have offered him the first worship in consideration of his fame, his heroism and his success There is none here, even if he is a child, whom we have not taken into our consideration (when offering the Arghya to Krishna). Passing over many persons who are accomplished and learned, we have thought Hari as deserving of the first worship. Amongst Brahmanas, he, who is old in knowledge, amongst Kshatriyas, he, who is great in strength. Amongst Vaisyas, he, who is rich in possessions and wealth; and amongst the Sudras, he who is old in age, deserves to be worshipped. There are two reasons for offering the worship to Govinda (Krishna). He is vastly learned in the Vedas and the Vedangas, and he is also very great in prowess. Who else is there in the world of men except Keshava (Krishna) who is so distinguished? Liberality, cleverness, knowledge of the Sruti (Veda), bravery, modesty, achievements, excellent intelligence, humility, beauty, firmness, contentment and prosperity, all live for ever in Achyuta (Krishna). Therefore, you should approve the worship offered to one who is endued with such accomplishments, who is (our) preceptor, father, and Guru. and who is worthy of the Arghya and of the worship. Hrisikesha (Krishna) is the Ritwija, preceptor,—worthy of being solicited to marry one's daughter,—the Snataka, the king and the friend. Therefore, Achyuta (Krishna) has been worshipped." *

The sources of divine love are evident from the attributes of Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna was never single, he is always with his consort, Sri or Radha or Lakshmi, hence he is called Sri Krishna. God cannot have any form as He is above maya or illusion, but when He comes to earth it is as an incarnation like Rama, who is merely a superman, a part of the great god but not God himself. God himself is the conscience in cultured man and woman and love makes an acquaintance with him.

"Hail wedded love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In paradise of all things common else.
By thee adulterous lust was driv'n from men

* The Mahabharata, Sabha Parva, Chapter XXXVIII, verses 16—22.

Among the bestial herds to range; by thee
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.
Far be it, that I should write thee sin or blame,
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,
Whose bed is undefil'd and chaste pronounc'd,
Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs us'd
Here Love his golden shafts employ, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendear'd,
Casual fruition; nor in court amours,
Mix'd dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,
Or serenade, which the starv'd lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain."*
"God hath assign'd us, nor of me shall pass
Unprais'd; for nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote.
Yet not so strictly hath our Lord impos'd
Labour, as to debar us when we need
Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
Of looks and smiles; for smiles from reason flow,
To brute deny'd and are of love the food,
Love not the lowest end of human life." †
"In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
Wherein true love consists not; love refines
The thoughts, and heart enlarges; hath his seat
In reason, and is judicious; is the scale
By which to heav'nly love thou may'st ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause
Among the beasts no mate for thee was found." ‡

Love is both the way and guide to heavenly love; thus the angel Raphael admonished Adam. But the Hindus go further. Sri Krishna is described as divine love personified, who came down to earth to wage war against vanity, calumny, envy, malice, the symptoms of human weakness in Jarasandha, Durjodhana, Kamsa, Sisupala, Karna, Dussasana, putting against them ideals of the Pandavas to make the world realise divine love through human love. Love is nothing but an illusion when man and woman transgress, are merged in passion and are lost.

"That with exhilerating vapour bland
About their spirits had play'd, and inmost powers
Made err, was now exhal'd, and grosser sleep
Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams

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* Milton's "Paradise Lost,' page 111.
† Ibid, page 231.
‡ Ibid, pages 220-221.

Encumber'd, now had left them, up they rose
As from unrest, and, each the other viewing,
Soon found their eyes how open'd and their minds
How darken'; innocence, that as a veil
Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone,
Just confidence, and native righteousness,
And honour from about them; naked left
To guilty shame; he cover'd, but his robe
Uncover'd more. So rose the Danite strong
Herculean Samson from the harlot-lap
Of Philistean Delilah, and wak'd
Shorn of his strength; they destitute and bare
Of all their virtue: silent, and in face
Confounded, long they sate, as strucken mute,
Till Adam, though not less than Eve abash'd,
At length gave utterance to these words constrain'd.
"O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear
To that false worm, of whomsoever taught
To counterfeit man's voice, true in our fall,
False in our promis'd rising; since our eyes
Open'd we find indeed, and find we know
Both good and evil, good lost, and evil got,
Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know,
Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
Our wonted ornaments now soil'd and stain'd,
And in our faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store,
Even shame, the last of evils; of the first
Be sure then. How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy
And rapture so oft beheld? those heav'nly shapes
Will dazzle now this earthly, with their blaze
Insufferably bright'.'*

The gate of divine love is closed to those whose mind is fouled with the darkness of passion and vanity. God is a law to the man of sense but pleasure is a law to a fool. Riches bring no honour to him who possesses them if his wants are not removed, for he seeks the help of others. Cultured man is the slave to God, but the ignorant, vain or wicked has to be a slave to a man below. It is impossible for those who have low or mean ideas about life and spend their lives in mercenary unemployments of forefathers to produce anything worthy of admiration which can form the subject matter of an Epic or history. Nature never meant man to be a low beast only, mad after his own pleasure and busy after his own existence. From the moment of man's birth he is nursed by the unselfish love of his parents, the work of the divine soul within them. Their love makes them sacrifice everything for the infant with no idea of any return from him. Others also tend

*Milton's "Paradise Lost," pages 256—258.

him and place him on the stage of the world. The infant's happiness and misery depend more or less on education and environment.

The sublime and lofty spirits of the ancients, reflected in the Indian Epics, are giving vent in the ideals of human love ascending to divine love of what nature actually designed man to be. The description of the tactics of the war or the bravery or deceits of the conquering heroes could never be the theme of the great Epic; it was a question of the victory of the side which had been imbued with universal love and not passion of winning kingdom, power and wealth by force of arms and tactics. It was for this Yudhisthira wanted to retire to expiate his sins in the war and such a thing could not take place in the beginning of the battle which gave birth to the Gita versions. It may be poetic but it was quite unnatural. Gita is a lesson of wisdom, religion and duty and not that of universal love with which Sri Krishna was from the very beginning identified. Sri Krishna gave his best soldiers to Durjodhana to fight against the Pandavas and he agreed to give counsels of love to the Pandavas. This cost the life of the nephew of Sri Krishna but he did not mind. He was not at all excited after the unlawful killing of Abhimanyu. How could he be aroused to do so in the case of Arjuna as the dramatic Mahabharata describes? Sri Krishna is not a partisan as the Gita depicts him.

"The blessed Lord said: 'Again, O mighty-armed, hear thou my supreme word, that, desiring thy welfare, I will declare to thee who are beloved.*' The blessed Lord said: 'Blessed be thou! I will declare to thee my divine glory by its chief characteristics, O best of the Kurus; there is no end to details of Me..... Asvattha of all trees; and of divine Rishis Narada; of Gandharvas (Celestial singers) Chitraratha; of the perfected the Muni Kapila. Uchchaishravas of horses know me, nectar (Amrita, the nectar of immortality) born; Airavata of lordly elephants, and of men the Monarch. Of weapons I am the thunderbolt; of cows I am Kamadhuk; I am Kandarpa of the progenitors; of serpents Vasuki am I"†

Love is virtue, sympathy and the dynamo lever which rules the world, and is represented in Sri Krishna. It is well-known that Sri Krishna's father and mother were both persecuted in the most cruel manner before he was born. It was depicted in bright colours how Basudeva carried the infant to Brindaban at dead of night, overcoming all difficulties and exchanged him with a girl to preserve his life. There is no affection so pure and heavenly as that demonstrated there. Love is the purification of the heart from selfish ends. It gives strength and courage, nay, it is sacred fire which leads man to nobler aims of life at the sacrifice of his own. The power to love truly and devotedly is the noblest gift of God above. The child Gopal, as Sri Krishna was known in his infancy, and the figure which is worshipped even now in

* Mrs. Annie Besant's "Bhagavad-Gita" 10th discourse, verse 1, page 133.

† Ibid page 139 verse 19 and page 141, verses 26—28.

India, gives vent to love's language in a child. "Love is a child that talks in broken language, yet then he speaks most plain." (Dryden). A child excites love in the heart of all without any jealousy ; but Kamsa wanted to destroy the child who, it was said, would kill him. It proves that love has no power when curbed by selfish ends. The stages of life are important in the growth to manhood. Youth is the most important of all the stages which connect childhood with manhood for it is then an individual is capable of thinking upon the theme of life. The beauty and poetry of life lies in its beginning, for then one must pass all the flowery places of love to develop the mind and realise the connection of soul with it. Anticipation is pleasant, but with Sri Krishna it was a question of realisation from the start.

The dream of the poet had been realised in the birth of Sri Krishna.

"Give me new love, warm, palpitating sweet
When all the grace and beauty leaves the old;
When like a rose it withers at my feet,
Or like a hearth grows cold."

Sri Krishna ignited the light of love in his adopted parents, Nanda and Yashoda, and their relations by the smile which graced his face and the cry of want in the hand he extended with the ball of food in it. He does not know how to eat, one must make him do so; he, who provides food for the world—this is the child God of the Hindus. The creation is impossible without the help of Maya, the love of parents in this world. The love of parents is the shade of the Almighty Father above within one-self. The father and mother, Basudeva and Devaki, stole another's daughter to save the life of their own son. It was for this selfishness that Krishna remained with Nanda and Yashoda as their son and punished his own parents. Krishna, brought up from infancy with the love of those who had no blood connection with him, aroused the love which God as a child could excite in the heart of all around him. In youth he excited the passion of love which in time enlarges the scene of one's future happiness. Love is the perpetual source of fears and anxieties, with which the well-wishers of Sri Krishna were distressed but he himself was not. What a child loves nobody knows, yet the root of love is in the child, the essence of unselfish love is there. The child rules the heart, and love is a debt which inclination always pays ; it is a mystery of mysteries. Love is the peace that restores harmony and confidence.

Sri Krishna mixed freely with girls of his own age in Brindaban and they could not but fall in love with him. He played on the flute with a heart to respond to their heart of love, but avoided their personal company. He teased and perplexed them in every way to teach them

decency and good manners. The girls used to bathe in the river naked, so he stole their clothes to prevent them doing so again. He stood against the practice of women carrying water from a long distance for domestic needs. He was born with all those warm affections and ardent longings after what is good. There is a woman at the beginning of great things, and so it is with the question of human love, but with that of divine love it is Sri Krishna and nobody else. Divine love permeates through the universe and cannot centre anywhere in individual man or woman.

Sri Krishna is the god who did everything and the others played minor parts and were more or less cowards. The whirling discus was the weapon of Sri Krishna and the plough that of Balarama. These are the two true instruments of love, on which the prosperity of the world depended from the very beginning of creation.

The story of Sri Krishna's infant life the great Epic does not give; he first appeared at the Svayambara of Draupadi. The conception of his infant life may be expressed in the lines of Wordsworth.

> "Meek Infant! among all forlornest things
> The most forlorn—one life of that bright star,
> The second glory of the Heavens?—Thou hast:
> Already hast survived that great decay,
> That transformation through the wide earth felt,
> And by all nations."
> ** ** ** ** **
> "Thine infant history, on the minds of those
> Who might have wandered with thee."
> ** ** ** ** **
> "Thy loneliness: or shall those smiles be called
> Feelers of love, put forth as if to explore
> This untried world, and to prepare thy way
> Through a strait passage intricate and dim?"
>
> (Wordsworth.)

The aim of his early life in Brindaban seemed to have been to love and be loved by others, and at last he became a happy warrior. Whosoever exerts himself to become just and virtuous receives the prize. Every one who runs a race does not get the prize. He who rules the world with the sceptre of wealth and a following of soldiers, subjects himself to many things and thus loves his liberty; but the man who reveals the love of God in his actions, fights the just cause by his wisdom and the prowess of his arms, he is worshipped with heart and soul by all who come in contact with him. He is not the child of nature but God himself, for nature cannot vanquish him with her love and devotion. Woman draws man, but Sri Krishna was just the opposite—he drew woman and was not overcome by her love. Women as a body could not do so. He excited their love by the play-

ing of his flute but never betrayed his passion for them. So Wordsworth sang the character of the Happy Warrior.

"'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for guard against worse ill
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest.
He fixes good on good alone, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife."

(WORDSWORTH).

Sri Krishna was depicted as a lover, an inspired generous spirit in the tasks of real life, and played in the many games of life, of love and justice. Neither could danger discourage him nor could the thought of tender love betray him. What he valued he won, what he undertook he fulfilled. He did not bow his head to any king, however powerful; he received homage from the greatest king to whom all the kings of India paid homage. He drew his breath not in human applause but in the confidence of heaven's joy. He built his castles in mid-ocean with the love of sixteen thousand beautiful princesses of India, yet none of them could enslave him. He was never found weeping over their separation or making any arrangements for them save and except calling upon Arjuna to look after them as in duty bound by his relationship.

Sri Krishna had no consciousness of Ego, *i. e.*, the sense of I do this, I do that, which is called Ahankar or knowledge of the vanity of self. Yudhisthira was found fault with by Sri Krishna in the Asvamedha Parva and Kama Gita he read out to Yudhisthira. The Gita is on that line, but very elaborate. Dharma means not only religion but morality, duty and politics. Sri Krishna diagnosed the disease in Yudhisthira's heart that the great destruction at the fierce battle of Kurukshettra was, after all, the work of Yudhisthira. This thought oppressed Yudhistira, and he was grieved. This was far from the fact as the great Sri Krishna proved to him by an allegory in the Kama Gita—to which the Srimad Bhagabata owed its origin—in the court of the Kurus by Sanjoya. What is divine love and Sri

Krishna ? There it is fully described, and what is amply described in the Srimad Bhagabata needs no repetition here. Sri Krishna's attributes of virtue are found expressed in his own mouth when he revived the great Parikshit on his own lap from the curse of the wicked Asvathama.

"Let this child be revived, if I have not told a lie or retired from the field of battle in my life by the virtue of it. Let this child be revived, if I have not made any difference between the beloved Abhimanyu and virtue and piety so dear to me. Let this child be revived if I have never quarrelled with Arjuna and I never departed from the virtue or truth."

This is the Parikshit who was revived by merit of the piety of Sri Krishna, who was himself the incarnation of divine love and peace on the earth below. He built his empire in the heart of sixteen thousand beauties of India by what he learned from the girls of Brindaban, who performed the celebrated Rashlila free from carnality and lust. The abstraction of love reflected in the pure heart of those blessed girls brought deliverance of the soul in some, but in Radha it was the union of souls within and without. This is the ideal Hindu conception of the enjoyment of love and the salvation of the soul. This is greater than the theory of Kapila or that Nirvana of Buddha. Thirst is quenched by the taste of water and not by the mirage in the desert. The ant knows the sweetness of sugar, but the sugar itself knows it not. A devotee alone knows the sweetness and gravity of divine love, but not the god himself. One cannot realise what love is if one has not loved anyone or been loved by another. The sweetness of love does not lie so much in the reciprocity with which earthly love exults, but its divinity lies in the stability of the union of the soul within oneself and that of the God above who excites love in His creation.

The great Epic and Puranas demonstrate it not by theories but by the examples of the sixteen thousand beauties, bred and brought up in luxury and wealth, who enslaved themselves at the feet of Sri Krishna. Such a thing was impossible had it been a case of earthly love springing from selfish motives and connected with the senses. The gospel of universal love which Sri Krishna preached was in the sound of his flute through sky and air which touched the heart of his lovers. He raised his voice in the mad brawl in the Svayambara of Draupadi and the marriage took place. He killed the great tyrants of the age Kamsa, Jarasandha, Sisupala, etc., without the loss of life of anyone else. It is this which made him come to be regarded as great as God. His policy made his followers, the Pandavas, the conquerors of the world, and he who stood against his worship was removed by the discus of love which saved the life of the braggart so many times before for the promise of love. He stood against the Yudus in the marriage of love

between Arjuna and Subhadra, perhaps the first of its kind. His connection with the Pandavas did not stand in the way of his giving his best trained soldiers to Durjodhana when the latter begged for them. He stood against the vicious conduct of Durjodhana and the blackmail practised by the vicious dice play at the Kuru Court, where the same Durjodhana was conspiring to catch and imprison him and abused him grossly through his messenger of war.

"For no reason, O Krishna, are you considered to be of great renown in this world and now they will know that many are the oxen who are impotent though they are blessed with horns. A king like me will not condescend to fight with a slave of Kamsa clad in mail." * "Assume the form what you showed once in the Kuru Court by the help of illusion and come and fight with me all your power along with Arjuna. One cannot be god by illusion, it is only sometimes frightful but to a fighter it excites his anger. I can assume many forms in my body, it is by the force of mind the great creator brought forth his creation. It is not by creating fright one can be successful.†" "Never dream that you shall get back your kingdom from the fear of Sri Krishna—neither deception, nor illusion nor trick of a conjurer is frightful to one who has taken up arms to fight. Thousand Krishnas and Arjunas will fly from the field when confronted by me, whose arms did not strike in vain ‡"

Yet Sri Krishna did not fight in the great battle but was only the charioteer of Arjuna. Not for nothing people ascribed divinity to him. His well-known conch of universal love sounded in the battlefield to warn the warriors of impending danger and he saved the lives of many either by warning, counsel or by intervening with his own person. He did not weep for his beloved nephew Abhimanyu nor was he roused to take active measures to revenge the gross wrong himself, but moved unconcerned in the field of battle and solaced his sister in the camp. It is this which made him be looked upon as supernatural or heavenly. The king Sisupala openly said in the Rajasuya of Yudhisthira that the kings assembled there paid him tribute out of virtuous motives alone, which amounted to a tribute of love and religion. In that sacrifice Sri Krishna received the first worship, and it was not a tribute of chivalry for the names of kings were recited who were more entitled to it if that was the object of the sacrifice. The great charge against his worship, levelled by Sisupala was—'Who will offer him worship when he has fallen from religion?'

It is evident that Sri Krishna was the reformer of the age in which he lived. In reply to the alleged charge it was held nobody present in the assembly beat Sri Krishna in knowleage, virtue, intelligence and action. If he was a reformer he proved to the world that there was a divinity in man which was above ideas of selfishness. The greatest of all

* The Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, Chapter CLX, verses 61-62.

† Udyoga Parva, Chapter CLX, verses 53—56.

‡ Udyoga Parva, Chapter CLX, verses 115—118.

heroes, Sri Krishna proved to the world that love is the greatest of all weapons in the world with which divine beings are invested, and God is the source of such love from which Maya (illusion) draws her inspiration and makes the creation which cannot last. What is love rests in the soul of man and is not to be found in the outer world in the body of external creation. Sri Krishna, if one truly realises him as a god, must be regarded as of the inner world and in that spirit he moves in the great Rashlila of the great book of divine love Srimad Bhagabata, which brought salvation to the king Parikshit, who died bitten by the poisonous snake and was revived by the love of Sri Krishna to which he was initiated by the son of Vyasa, Suka, in the great book just mentioned.

Sri Krishna, the emblem of divine love, showed the rare and noble virtue of God by his disinterestedness in all concerns of the great Epic. He said to Arjuna before the war.

"No stone would be left unturned by me to do what would contribute to the general well-being of the Kurus and the Pandavas. *"

He was not biased nor could he be bribed, as would appear from the quotations below:—

"It is impossible for me to do anything against the divine dispensation which rules the human destiny, or to control the wicked inclination of a man who disregards virtue. † "... (Vidura said to the old king Dhritarastra)...." Vidura said:—What you desire to present your guest Krishna with is much; but the scion of the Dasharha race deserves all this and much more, or indeed the whole earth. For the sake of virtue or for desire of pleasing him however you do not give all this to Krishna; and I speak truly that you do this for the gain of yourself."..."You desire to win over the son of Vrisnis to your own side by wealth; and by this means you want to create gulf between himself and the Pandavas.".. "On anything else besides a pot full of water and water for washing his feet and interrogations on his health he will not even cast his eyes. Show him, however, that hospitality which is acceptable to that large-soul one deserving of honour, O king, that Janardana is the proper party for showing honour to. Keshava comes here expecting to do good to the Kurus. Do that, O king, by which that object may be gained. The scion of the Dasharha race desires peace for yourself and for Durjodhana and for the Pandavas as well, O chief among kings; do you, therefore, what he says.‡"

The acts of Sri Krishna are commemorated and celebrated in the birthday anniversary (Janmastami) even now all over India. The shrines of India are full of his images, which are worshipped by thousands of pilgrims with sincere love, admiration and devotion. No better proof of divine love than these could be given, as he commanded the universal love of all men during his life-time. Sri Krishna is the emblem of divine love which the great Epic Mahabharata preaches.

* The Mbh. Udyoga Parva, Chapter LXXIX, verse 1.

† Udyoga Parva, Chapter LXXIX, verse 6.

‡ The Mbh. Udyoga Parva, Chapter LXXXVII, verses 6-7, 10, & 13—16.

The basis of empiric moral ethics depends on the ideal human personality, which consists of the harmonious development of all the faculties and instincts inherent in the human race. The proper use of each and every faculty increases its range, scope and quality to set back the idea of promiscuous sexualism. It is for this Sri Krishna is placed in the midst of the enlightened beautiful maidens of Brindaban and Draupadi (Krishna) within the five Pandavas,—the ideal, cultured youths of the Kuru families whom all the other princes enrich as well as the kings—the illustrious great heroes and heroine of the great Epic. The lifting of a molehill by Sri Krishna in his youth apropos his physical strength but demonstrates one significant fact, the power of the soul force behind it. An Indian, Krishna Murti, proved it by demonstration all over India by his feats considered so very wonderful as that of keeping a baby elephant on his breast and breaking very heavy stones lifted by half a dozen men on his breast. This has been practised by others on these lines.

To such a Sri Krishna sexual power had no value. Spirit is quite different from matter, but the light never burns unless there is the union of the positive and the negative in electricity. The worship of the couple Radha and Sri Krishna from the scientific viewpoint is only natural. The blind soul must be illusioned by the union of divine love created in the breast of man and woman. Where there is selfishness there is perversity and sin, but when the soul is free to choose to serve the truth it fears no calumny, no injustice, no suffering, however cruel; it rises with greater force, like the stream rushing from the mountain breast to fall into the ocean. It is for this reason the great consort of Siva is called the daughter of the Himalayas, the consort of Vishnu came out of the ocean of love and the goddess of love, Sarasvati, is the speech by which gods and the great sages were made and naturally the consort of the creator. The loving faith of the ancient Hindus is here fully demonstrated. The learned Dr.. Hopkins says:—

"The worship of Krishna as a popular divinity, corresponding to Herakles in the Greek account of Megasthenes, is probably as old as the fourth century B. C. In the second century it appears to have still been no more than the cult of a hero-god, who may have been regarded as an avatar of Vishnu by his special adorers, the inhabitants of the district about Delhi and Muttra. But he was still a hero rather than a god, as Megasthenes says in identifying the valley-god with Herakles and the mountain-god Civa with Dionysos. This is Krishna's character in many parts of the Epic, always, divine, though this means little in India; but often he is clearly only a hero-divinity, and he is once, when assuming to be Supreme God, sharply rebuked for his pretensions, though of course he triumphs over his revilers. Elsewhere, however, in the same Epic, Krishna is

unquestioned God. But whatever he is, godling, man-god, or God, he reveals himself at first only in human form."*

There is universal hankering after enjoyment. In the spiritual realm of the Hindus, God is the sole enjoyer like a materialist. Soul can give him enjoyment and not the senses. God has nobody. Where the milk-maids of Brindaban enjoyed Sri Krishna, the person of Sri Krishna was absent but his spirit enlightened by the full moon and stars gave them the enjoyment in the separation form in the material sense. The poets develop love in separation. The great Indian poet Kalidas did in his famous Sakuntala, Kumarsambhaba, Meghduta and Raghubamsa. All these are the love of separation. Separation makes one realise true goodness by analysis. All human beings are subjected to Maya and naturally fall an easy prey to temptations, and Sri Krishna by his own example showed and proved to the world how to avoid illusion. Sri Krishna was there as long as was necessary to develop his senses and power to control them. When he learnt this fully by practice he left the place to remove the bad example of the evil practices of Kamsa. The milk-maids wanted him but he did not return; he was then in the midst of married wives, he saw their frailties and left them to practice Yoga to leave this mortal evil. This is the long and short of Sri Krishna's life in the past which was depicted in the sacred books of the Hindus.

The great Epic is concerned not with his early exploits but with his political and philosophical if not spiritual mission in the world. In world politics no man can beat him. It was his policy at Draupadi's marriage at the dramatic disclosure of the Pandavas before their flight from the lac house that exposed the Kuru chiefs before the kings of the world present at the Svayambara and made them hang their heads and agree to give up the share of the Pandavas without trouble. It was his policy which killed Jarasandha, another tyrant of India, and liberated the kings imprisoned for a sacrifice to declare himself the Emperor of India. It was he who removed another like him, Sisupala, at the Rajasuya, and made Yudhisthira and Draupadi the Emperor and Empress of India without any bloodshed. It was he who took upon himself the task of vindicating the actions of the Pandavas and censuring the Kurus in their court on his peace mission. It was bearding the lions in their den, and Durjodhana and his friends felt the insult very keenly and tried to imprison him. If they attempted to do so, he told them plainly, they would be killed and he was ready for it. This non-plussed them. He knew that his mission would be abortive, but he undertook the same with a view to convince the world as a warning that virtue will triumph,

*Dr. Hopkins' "India Old and New," page 146.

though it may suffer in the beginning. He was a messenger of virtue and was rewarded in the end.

The human soul has the power of dominating the soul of God, as the great Sri Radha by her own example proved. Sri Radha's love is divine love to which Sri Krishna is radiated. No religion of the world could think of demonstrating it. This is the great riddle of love solved by Sri Radha and Sri Krishna in their exploits of love, which the base material world interpret in their own ribald fashion. If they were guilty of any heinous crime the sentimental Hindus who exult in the Ramayana could not accept Sri Krishna as a God greater than Rama, as the former was the development of the latter whose love, life and works the prophet Sri Chaitanya explored. Sri Krishna was the hero of love and not of the famous battlefield of Kurukshettra. He was there to counsel the human hero Arjuna and his brothers.

Incarnations of Gods come to earth to perform distinct works. They were not the conception of the Vedic or Upanishad ages but wholly Pouranic. Incarnations cannot remain one moment after their works are done. Sri Krishna was not an incarnation, though his brother Balarama was. Sri Krishna is God himself, he is divine love, his work is to demonstrate what is divine love distinct from human love. The Epic demontrates human love and for that reason Sri Krishna is not the hero of the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata does not describe one hero like Rama and there lies the greatness of the Mahabharata over the Ramayana. The five Pandavas were the different attributes of humanity and love, Kunti, Gandhari, Draupadi, Subhadra and Satyabhama were the distinguishing features, womanly virtues. Bidura, Bhisma and Sri Krishna were ideals of wisdom, chivalry and divine love, respectively. It is not the duty of these men to pass through the different stages of human life like the Pandavas or any other heroes. Bidura and Bhisma were the great counsellors of the Kuru Court, their births were mysterious, their marriages were not known, they left no heirs. One was minister of counsel and the other minister of war to the Kurus, but Sri Krishna was the minister of divine love, which ruled supreme in the heart of the great Pandavas and their family. Gandhari cursed the great Sri Krishna because Sri Krishna was so difficult to realise that his children, lulled in the lap of luxury, did not realise him.

Divine love and luxury and passion are quite apart. The ancient sages developed divine love by the discipline of early life, into which the Pandavas were initiated in the woods during their exile. The demand for five villages by Sri Krishna on behalf of the Pandavas is full of meaning. The institute of the ancient Hindu Daksha Samhita says ;—

"He, who enjoys others' kingdom by force or otherwise, cannot be called a hero; but he, who conquers the five senses of knowledge along with the mind said to refer to the five villages of the body, can truly be called a hero and as body can conquer him be he God or Asura."*

It may equally apply to the Pandavas and Draupadi, the mind over whom the divine love of Sri Krishna concentrated.

The great Christ and Sri Krishna are not the same, though attempts have been made to prove this. Sri Krishna was born of a father and mother and nursed by another parent and was not an adventitious production like Christ, the great. The learned Dr. Hopkins' views will provide interesting reading on the point:—

"The West owes much to India, and though most of this was brought westward centuries after the Christian era, it is still within the bounds of possibility that even the New Testament was not completed without a graft from such a foreign growth. But this is as far as the historical data permit us to go, and such a possibility, affecting at most only what is secondary in the account, furnishes no base for the belief that the original narrative of Christ's birth and teaching derives from Hindu sources."† "In the fourth century, too, arose the practice of observing Christmas Day, which was celebrated not at first on December 25, but on various dates, for in the third century Christ's birthday was variously held to be on January 5 or 6, March 28, April 19 or 20, May 20, and November 19; just as the Puranas, that describe the Birthday Festival of Sri Krishna, give the time variously on different dates (between June and September), though they all agree that the hour is midnight. We cannot think, as was taught when Sri Krishna's name was first explained as the *nomen ipsum corruptum Christi*, that Krishna-worship is all a corruption of the Christian religion. For with more light on the background we can see more clearly what lies behind the Child-god Krishna. But in seeing this we are also brought to recognize how great is the change in the character of the Hindu divinity. So decided is the alteration and so direct is the connection between this later phase of Krishnaism and the Christianity of the early centuries of our era, that it is no expression of extravagant fancy but a sober historical statement to say that in all probablity the Hindus in this cult of the Madonna and Child have in reality, though unwittingly, been worshipping the Christ-Child for fully a thousand years."‡ ... ...

"In the first place, Upanishads may be of any age from 600 B. C. onward, and sectarian Upanishads are uniformly late. Then the metre and language of the Gita are such as to make it impossible to connect it closely in time with the ancient Upanishads even in its oldest parts, and it has besides two different parts, one of which is later than the other, so that it is pretty clear that it has been re-written. But above all, not only is the religion as inculcated, with its devotion not to a stern master, but to a sin-forgiving, love-demanding saviour god in human form, something absolutely unique up to the time it appears, but it is acknowledged also both by friend and foe in the Epic narrative itself that Krishna is a new form of God (not a new god, for Krishna had long been a popular god), and that the new religion has as yet few adherents. When these facts are weighed together with the fact that the Epic, as we have it, is at most not more than two hundred years older than the Christian era, and that it is almost certain that parts of it are as late as two or perhaps more centuries

* 7th Chapter, 17 and 18 verses.

† Dr. Hopkins' "India Old and New," page 168.

‡ Dr. Hopkins' "India Old and New," pages 166 and 167.

after our era, it seems possible that the original Gita, which was without doubt composed at least 200 B. C., and appears to have been at first a Yogin tract simply, was affected by the introduction of a new religious spirit and that it absorbed some of the ideas presented in the form most Oriental and nearest to Hindu conceptions; namely, in the fourth Gospel."*

"In other respects also, the language and tales of the later Epic suggest the possibility of Christian influence quite as much as Christian tales suggest Indian influence. I lay no great weight on them, but they should be known, if only as a companion-piece to what is found in the West and referred to the East. Krishna is a by-name of Vyasa, the author of the Epic (in so far as the arranger of the mass may be called author), who, though not identified with Krishna as Supreme God, is himself divine, and is described as "the unborn (that is, the eternal) and ancient one, the only son of God, born of a virgin, very part, anca of God". He is a figure unknown till the end of the Epic, and even his name Vyasas, Vyasas, has a certain similarity with iesos. Then of the god Krishna it is said: 'He, the guardian of his flock, the sinless God, the Lord of the world, consented to the death of (himself and) his race that he might fulfil the word of the seers,' where, if we had shepherd and prophets, the comparison would be very striking. Another passage not connected with the Gita, but close to biblical phraseology, may be found in the description of the avenging spirits: 'If thou goest into the depths of the earth, or if thou shouldst fly above, or if thou fleest to the further side of the sea, still thou shalt find no escape from them'; as compared with the Psalmist's words, 'Whither shall I fly ... into heaven...Sheol ... the uttermost parts of the sea?' Compare also 'I am not crying in the wilderness,' followed by, 'Thou seest the faults of others, though they be no larger than mustard, but thine own faults thou canst not see, though they be as large as a bilva (tree)'. As these comparisons have not, I think, been noticed before, I give them for what they are worth. Even the crucifixion has its analogy in the story of the Stake-saint (Impaling being the equivalent of crucifixion), who was unjustly impaled with thieves, but he did not die like the thieves and so awakened the wonder of the royal guard. They went and told the king, who was frightened when he heard of it and came to the Saint on the stake and besought his forgiveness, which was granted, as the king had acted ignorantly. He is besung in all the worlds as the Impaled One. But all the rest of the story is grotesque. It is perhaps not impossible that there is here the echo of the Christian story.

"A curious historical sketch in the Epic relates that the cult of Krishna as one God was introduced after the notion of Unitarianism had been gained by three pilgrims, who went to an Albion in the North-West and there found this religion practised by White Men. Professor Weber, despite the repeated statement that the White Island was located in the extreme North or North-West, referred this to Alexandria, and all sorts of suppositions have been made in regard to the locality, the three sages being identified with the Three Wise Men of the East, and the North-West being referred to every Western land from Parthia to Rome. The legend is late and an obvious intrusion into the Epic. It lays stress on the Unity of God, rather than on the All-god idea, though the latter is, of course, not given up, and the devotees of Krishna who insist on this idea call themselves Ekantinas, or Unitarians. For myself, I am more inclined to believe that the Civaite faith of Kashmere (a philosophical deism) is here re-cast into Vishnuite form; for the sea to which the pilgrims come is merely the mythical milksea of the Himalayas, and Kashmere men are almost white as compared with Hindus. The doctrine taught shows no trace of Christianity but only of a belief in One God.†" ..

* Dr. Hopkins' "India Old and New," pages 157-8.
† Dr. Hopkins' "India Old and New," pages 159—161.

"As Krishna in the Gita says that there are very few who acknowledge him to be the Supreme God, so it is expressly stated that these Unitarians are few in number, xii. 349, 62. Such repeated admissions only bear out the belief, otherwise well supported, that Krishnaism in the Gita and Ekantin forms are two late developments, though the latter is the later."*...

"He who speaks is the divine man Krishna, who in this poem, called the Lord's Recitation, Bhagavad Gita (gita) is imparting to his disciple the truths of a religion which in the Epic is recognised as essentially new. For the old religion was the worship of the Herakles like popular divinity, but in the Epic Krishna is represented as having but recently made claim to be the avatar of the Supreme God, a claim not yet wholly recognized by other Epic characters and one which Krishna himself naively says is admitted only by a few persons. It is therefore of peculiar interest to find that there is a close parallel between the words of this Krishna and those of Christ's disciples."......" Now it is true that the word bhakti scarcely occurs before the Epic and does not occur at all in the Krishnaite sense before the Epic, for though it is found in one late Upanishad, yet there it is not love but devotion to a fearful God before whom 'one comes in fear', just as in the older Upanishads."†

The essence of the ideal divine love may be said to be in the words of the Upanishads. It is a sacrifice of the human senses in the fire of self-control. The light of the knowledge of divine love is the glory of God. It cannot be attained by a man or a woman who hates the society of men and women, does not realise the affection of a son, daughter, brother, mother, father and all near and dear ones, where the great God's love is reflected and co-ordinated. Society carries the goodwill of the God above and the picture of ancient society is that of the contrast between heaven and hell. Necessarily there must be Ravana and Rama, Meghanada and Lakshmana, Bibhison and Bharata, Sugriba and Hanumana, Durjodhana and Yudhisthira, Dussasana and Bhima, Karna and Arjuna, Sakuni and Bidura, Bhisma and Sri Krishna, Drona and Drupada, Asvathama and Abhimanyu, Dhritarastra and Birata. Sri Krishna gave his best soldiers to Durjodhana and did not himself fight in the great battle inspite of insult and the evil intention of Durjodhana, but Bhisma inspite of his age and professions of friendship to the just cause failed to act up to his own standard whenever occasion arose and laid down his life for it, which Sri Krishna stated openly in the Kuru Court.

The discuss, the favourite weapon of Sri Krishna, was called Radha Chakra as Radha loved it very much. Sri Krishna was invincible with this instrument of war. He killed the dreadful Asuras with it, and King Sisupala in one stroke. The very name Sisupala implies the head of youngsters, the principal objector to Sri Krishna occupying the first seat of honour in the sacrifice. It might mean that he did not believe

* Dr. Hopkins' 'India Old and New,' Footnot No. 1 of page 161.

† Dr. Hopkins' 'India Old and New,' Footnote No. 1 of page 148.

in a worship different from the old Vedic ideals. Sri Krishna was a new model of worship of divine love—GOD IS LOVE AND LOVE IS GOD. From human love divine love originates; this is the gospel truth the great Epic preaches. The great incarnation of God comes down to earth for specific objects; as soon as they are fulfilled he must go through the gate of death but not through the diseased deaths of mortals. Sri Krishna and Balarama left the world while in concentration of mind. The death of Sri Krishna by the arrow of a hunter is a later dramatic development in the terms of Valmiki's first verse of inspiration and cannot be a historical fact.

Europeah scholars have failed to see the all-important point, that Sri Rama and Sita and Sri Krishna and Radha are the most familiar gods of the general Hindus in India, since the days of the Upanishads. There are Upanishads which declare them to be supreme Gods. Sri Rama is worshipped in Setu Bandha Rameshara, Sri Krishna at Dwarka, Narayana at Badarikasrama and Radha-Gobinda or Krishna at Jaypore and Brindaban, all famous shrines of the Hindus. Sri Krishna gave effect to force regulated by wisdom. Senseless violence on the part of the Kurus produced harm. This was the lesson of the great war of Kurukshettra.

The life of the Pandavas has personal aspects, legendary developments and religious consequences in the advanced stages of society. In the personal aspect the Pandavas were the co-adjutors of Sri Krishna and Drupada, etc, destroyers of Jarasandha, Durjodhana and his allies and established the kingdom of justice and benevolence. In the legendary developments of history they paved the way to establishing Sri Krishna as the divine God in place of Narayana by their following. Yudhisthira, as the founder of Krishna religion in India, left behind him a system of beliefs which has gained more disciples than any other creed in India. The epoch of the Kaliyuga is usually identified with the era of Yudhisthira, which is counted not from his birth but from the disappearance from the earth of all vicious tyrants and agnostics in the war of Kurukshettra. Sri Krishna when he fulfilled the object for which he came to earth did not remain but disappeared like a mirage and that was perhaps the era of Sri Krishna christened with the name of the just King of India, Yudhisthira, whose disappearance synchronised with it as the great Epic describes. This was 3102 B. C., but astronomers give the date of the war more than* six centuries later. Professor Bhandarkar has shown that at the time of Patanjali's Mahabhasya Krishna worship attained some degree of prominence in India.

* J. R. A. S. 1911, page 675.

It will not be out of place to quote here some portions from the Encyclopaedia Britannica's article on Brahmanism:—

"One of the chief effects it produced on the worship of the old gods was the rapid decline of the authority of the orthodox Brahmanical dogma, and a considerable development of sectarianism. Among the great variety of deities of the pantheon, Siva, Vishnu, and Parvati have since claimed by far the largest share of adoration and it is in special accounts of the Saiva, Vaishnava, and Sakta sects rather than in an exposition of the Brahmanical belief, that the religious history of India from about the beginning of our era can be dealt with satisfactorily. At that time the worship of Vishnu in his most popular avatar, in the person of Sri Krishna, appears to have received much countenance at the hands of the priests, with a view of counteracting the growing influence of Buddhism. The sectarian spirit gave gradually rise to a special class of works, the modern Puranas composed for the express purpose of promoting the worship of some particular deity." * (The particular deities are Jagannath, Subhadra and Balarama of Puri.).. ...

"The modern god is represented as undergoing, for the benefit of mankind, a number of avataras or incarnations, ten of which are especially dwelt upon by the fervid imagination of his followers. The exact time at which these several episodes were incorporated into the cult of Vishnu cannot at present be ascertained. As they are for the most part conceived in a decidedly Brahmanical spirit,—the special object for which Vishnu assumes a human form being generally to deliver the people from the oppression of some wicked tyrannous prince,—it is probable that they were mostly introduced at a time when there was still some danger of the Kshatriyas defying the Brahmanical rule. Of somewhat different origin were, perhaps two of Vishnu's most popular and important incarnations, *viz.*, those in which he manifests himself in the persons of Sri Krishna and Rama, two heroes whose exploits are celebrated in the Mahabharata and Ramayana. It is possible that these warriors and their legendary achievements had been favourite subjects of heroic poetry for some time previous to the overthrow of the Kshatriyas, and that, being already regarded by the latter as representative of Vishnu, they were afterwards recognised as such by the Brahmans, and thus gave rise to the system of Avataras." †

Professor Wilson's observations are very interesting.

"Now it is true that in the present constitution of Indian society the distribution of the periods of life, beyond that of the student, is never regarded except by a few, who prefer a life of lazy mendicity, or by some half-crazed enthusiast, who thinks it possible to realise the letter of the law. The great body of the people, Brahmans included, pursue their worldly avocations as long as their faculties permit, spend the decline of life in the bosom of their families, and die peaceably and decently at home. But although the practice is discontinued, the doctrine remains and influences opinion; and devotional ceremonies, pilgrimage, penance, and abstract contemplation have an undue preponderance in the estimation of the people, even the best informed among them, over active duties and the precept of morality. As to the common people they have a still lower scale, and they find a ready substitute for the inconveniences of all moral restraint in the fervour of that faith which they place in Vishnu, and the unwearied perseverance with which they train a parrot or a starling to repeat his names, to articulate Krishna-Radha, or Sita-Ram."‡

* Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume IV, pages 209 and 210

† Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume IV. page 208.

‡ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume IV, page 210.

The Hindu tradition about the great Jagannath is worth mentioning here as it has great bearing on the death of Sri Krishna. King Indra Dyumna entrusted Visvakarma with making a figure of Jagannath with the bones of Sri Krishna at the instance of one great sage. The great artist of heaven told the king that he would make a stipulation with him before undertaking the work, that he would do his work behind closed doors and if he was at all interfered with he would leave the work. After a fortnight the king could not restrain his curiosity and opened the door of the temple and the great artist left the incomplete work in disgust. In that stage the incomplete figure is worshipped and every twelve years renovated. It is a worship of Brahma in Nirguna shape, having no hands or feet to perform the works of creation; these were all left to Subhadra, sitting in the middle as the Prakriti, as the name implies, the most beautiful, who worships the Mahattahva Balaram and Para-brahma Jagannath.

Early phallic worship was developed in the worship of divine love in Sri-Krishna and Radha, Sita and Rama and Hara and Gouri. With the martial and agricultural races of India, horses, cows, bulls, elephants, dogs and cheetah were found useful animals and they were the carriers of the gods and goddesses of India. The four-handed Narayana, without a mate, ceased to be the popular god of India. Gods and goddesses without divine love cannot tell upon the religious sentiments of love. The Adikeshab of Benares, one of the oldest gods of the place, is almost deserted in a lonely place. The pilgrims used to visit the place first before they entered Benares but it is now seldom visited by them. This is the great change the Indian Epics effected on the people of India.

The learned historian Vincent Smith assigns the reign of Vasudeva to the early period after the death of Christ. The two great dynasties, the Kushan in Northern India and the Andhra in the tableland of the Deccan, disappear together almost at 226 A. D. (p. 289). He is positively of opinio "that Vasudeva was the last Kushan king who continued to hold extensive territories in India. After his death no trace of paramount power in Northern India could be traced. The settlements of the Abhiras appear to have been very ancient; their name is found with that of the Sudras in a dictum of Patanjali, second century B. C. (Keilhor Mahabhasya 1.252) (Indian Antiquary XLV II. p. 36)."*

"The inscriptions of Vasudeva, mostly found at Mathura, certainly range in date from the year 74 to the year 98 of the era used in the Kushan age and indicate a reign of not less than twenty-five years. We may assume that his reign terminated in or about the year 220. K. P. Joyoswal holds Vasudeva, a contemporary of the Western satrap Rudrasena (A. D. 199–222) (J. B. O. Res. Soc. vi. page. 22)." "Huvishka was succeeded by Vasudeva, whose thoroughly Indian name, a synonym

* Prof. V. A. Smith's 'Early History of India,' page 290 and Footnote No. 1.

for Vishnu, is a proof of the rapidity with which the foreign invaders had succumbed to the influence of their environment".*

Sri Krishna Vasudeva was a historical character. It will be seen that the tradition of making the images of Jagannath etc., with the bones of Sri Krishna, Subhadra and Balarama and the building of the temple of Jagannath at Puri reconcile with the time. This was the memorial raised by the family of the great Vasudev family or their adherents. The allegory of Sri Krishna's death is significant. Jara (old age) with which the great sage Sukra cursed his son-in-law, Yajati, was personified as a hunter and killed by mistake Sri Krishna by shooting an arrow at his feet considering him to be a deer. The cause of his death seems to have been old age and nothing else.

Birth and death are the important features of a man's life, and Sri Krishna's birth took place in the prison of Kansa, the incarnation of malice. He was released from that prison by a miracle, as it were, through natural phenomena and the divine inspiration and courage of Vasudeva. He grew up not in any extraordinary manner but his boyhood was full of events which called for record. His mental endowments were quite normal to his age and race, but there was nothing of that narrow, prejudiced view of Kshatriya aristocracy in which he was born. He was brought up in a family of Vaisyas of Brindaban, who tended cows and offered milk and curd to the nation. His loving passion from boyhood to steal those delicacies by all sorts of mischievous pranks attracted the notice of all and made him the great favourite of the cowherd girls and matrons there. He was nursed in their milk of human love and realised what relief a parentless, forlorn child feels in the natural love and affection of others. He became the idol of their great affection. The loving image of Nanda's Gopal is still worshipped in India and believed to be the most beloved and powerful of all images of God.

His vision was normal to humanity and showed none of those co-regional defects which are peculiar to the caste system in India. A child, a helpless orphan as he was, claimed the sympathy of all irrespective of any relationship, in the great circle of loving Brindaban, free from the common sin of selfishness of affection. When the great tyrant Kansa was killed the people offered the throne left vacant to him, but he refused it and came into prominence. He has no personal ambitions of his own. The lasses of Brindaban could not tempt him to leave Mathura and live in Brindaban. The girls he loved in youth did not adorn the palace of love he built in Dwarka as his queens. He scaled those peaks of the moral life, the glaring temptations show him the evils he resisted,

* Prof. V. A. Smith's 'Early History of India,' page 288.

the Epic shows the world the ethical qualities with which he was crowned and adorned.

In his life he gave up everything to the service of humanity—he sacrificed the best soldiers he raised. When their work was over, he realised that they must be destroyed and lent them to Durjodhana. He stood the great trial before the world when it cost the life of his beloved nephew Abhimanyu. He did not raise his voice against the shameful and cruel murder of the helpless youth Abhimanyu, nor did he take part in the war to revenge the great wrong. Here the divine and the human element are not in conflict but are blended in the character of Sri Krishna, which the great Epic still presents to the world. One can only know God as He is revealed, not in the doctrines of philosophy and religion but in the true example of divine character. The Epic presents this both from the theological and historical sides of the question.

Gandhari.

The curse of the chaste lady Gandhari was more powerful than that of an ascetic Utamka, and Sri Krishna fell a victim to it. Gandhari's curse runs as follows :—

"'On the thirty-sixth year from this, O destroyer of Madhu, you will, after bringing about the death of your kinsmen and friends and sons, perish by disgustful means within the forest. The ladies of your family, deprived of sons, kinsmen, and friends, shall weep and cry even as these ladies of the Bharata family.' Vaishampayana continued:—Hearing these words, the great Krishna, addressing the worshipful Gandhari, said to her these words, smilingly,—'There is none in the world, save myself, who can exterminate the Vrishnis. I know this well. I am trying to bring it about. In imprecating this curse, O you of excellent vows, you have helped me in the accomplishment of that work. The Vrishnis are incapable of being killed by others, whether human beings or Gods or Danavas. The Yadavas, therefore, shall be killed by one another.' After the Dasharha hero had said so, the Pandavas became stupefied. Stricken with anxiety, all of them became hopeless of life."*

" Krishna said :— Arise, arise, O Gandhari, do not grieve. Through your fault, this huge destruction has taken place. Your son Durjodhana, was wicked, envious, and exceedingly arrogant. Praising his wicked acts, you thought them to be good. Highly ruthless, he was the embodiment of hostilities, and disobedient to the commands of the old. Why do you then attribute your own faults to me? Dead or lost, the person who grieves for what has already taken place suffers greater grief. By grieving one increases it twofold. A saintly woman bears children for the practice of austerities; the cow brings forth offspring for bearing burden; the mare brings forth her young for acquiring speed of motion; the Shudra woman bears a child for increasing the number of servitors; the Vaishaya woman for increasing the number of keepers of cattle. A princess, however, like you, brings forth sons for being killed."†

* Stree Parva, Chapter XXV, verses 41—49.

† Stree Parva, Chapter XXVI, verses 1—6.

Kunti.

The greatness of Kunti is described in Asramavasika Parva.

"Firmly resolved to retire into the forest, Kunti disregarded these lamentations of her sons. Draupadi and Subhadra followed their weeping mother-in-law, who was bent upon going into the forest. Highly wise and firmly resolved on retirement from the world, the blessed dame walked on, frequently looking at her weeping family. The Pandavas, with all their wives and servitors, continued to follow her. Restraining then her tears, Kunti addressed her children as follows:"* 'What you say, O mighty-armed sons of Pandu is, indeed, true. When you were all dispirited, I encouraged you all. Seeing that your kingdom was taken away from you by a game of dice, seeing that you all fell from happiness, seeing that you were governed over by kinsmen, I instilled courage and high thoughts into your minds. O foremost of men, I inspired you so that the sons of Pandu might not be lost, so that their fame might not be gone. You are all equal to Indra. Your prowess resembles to that of the very celestials. I acted thus so that you had not to live, depending upon others. I instilled courage into your hearts so that you who would be the foremost of all righteous men, who were equal to Vasava, might not again go into the forest and live in misery. I instilled courage into your hearts so that this Bhima who had the strength of ten thousand elephants and whose prowess and manliness were widely known, might not sink into insignificance and ruin. I instilled courage into your hearts so that this Vijaya, who was born after Bhimasena, and who was equal to Vasava himself, might not be cheerless. I instilled courage into your hearts so that Nakula and Sahadeva, who were always devoted to their elders, might not be weakened and rendered cheerless by hunger. I acted thus in order that this lady of well-developed forms and of large eyes might not suffer the wrongs inflicted on her in the public hall without being avenged. Before you all, O Bhima, trembling all over like a plaintain tree during her catamenial period, and after she had been won at dice, Dusshasana, through folly, dragged her, as if she were a slave. I knew all this. Indeed, the family of Pandu had been subjugated (by foes). The Kurus, *viz.*, my father-in-law and others, were cheerless when she, desirous of a protector, bewailed like a she-osprey. When she was dragged by her fair locks by the sinful Dusshasana without little intelligence, I lost my senses, O king. Know, that for increasing your energy, I instilled that courage into your hearts by reciting the episode of Vidula. O my sons, I instilled courage into your hearts, O my sons, so that the family of Pandu, represented by my children, might not be lost. The sons and grandsons of that person who brings a family to infamy never succeed in acquiring the regions of the righteous. Indeed, the ancestors of the Kaurava race were in danger of losing those happy regions which had become theirs. O my sons, as for myself, I enjoyed the great fruits of that sovereignty which my husband had won before. I made large gifts. I duly drank the Soma-juice in sacrifice. It was not for my own sake that I had urged Vasudeva with the stirring words of Vidula. It was for your sake that I had asked you to follow that advice. O my sons, I do not wish to enjoy the fruits of that sovereignty which was acquired by my children. O you of great power, I wish to attain those happy regions by my penances, where my husband went. By rendering obedient service to my father-in-law and mother-in-law, both of whom wish to take up their residence in the forest observing penances. I wish, O Yudhisthira, to exhaust my body. You desist from following me, O foremost son of Kuru's race, along with Bhima and others. Let your understanding be always devoted to virtue. Let your mind be always great."†

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* Ashramavasika Parva, page 19, Chapter XIV, verses 29—32.

† The Mahabharata Ashramavasika, Parva, Chapter XVII, pages 19-20, verses 1—21.

Vijaya was originally the name of Arjuna. His heroism entitled him to the epithet of Arjuna, by which another ancient well-known hero was Kartabirajarjuna. The cause of Kunti's being in favour of the fight was given. She had high ideals for her action; the proud tyrant should not be allowed to indulge in his excesses leaving a bad example but he should be crushed so that others would not follow him. That was the lesson of the war. The real Epic did not aim at describing the details of the skill of the individual Generals of the Kurus. The war Parvas were all additions of a much later date to extoll the glory of the kings who fell in the great battle to their descendants who ruled the different provinces of India. The cause of the degradation of the Dravids, Abhiras, Pundras and Shavars of Orissa are given in the Asvamedha Parva, Chapter XXIX, which formed a part of Anu-Gita:—

"The Brahmana said:—About it is cited the ancient story, O lady, of the discourse between Karttaviryya and the Ocean."

Yudhisthira.

The most towering and sublime figure amongst the characters of the Mahabharata which leaves an abiding impression, is that of Yudhisthira. He is virtue and justice incarnate. He was subjected to every kind of temptation to which a great prince like him was then liable. Besides there was a very strong combination of circumstances in which temptation to dishonesty was pre-eminent as he was fully subjected to it. The test reveals that particular ethical quality in which he might reasonably have been expected to fail.

Life was not interpreted in terms of the material; it must be described in terms of the spiritual. Man is addicted to temptation for personal success, but to the cultured ambition seems to have lain in the cause of the amelioration of the general public and the country at large. To wait for the proper time and opportunity was the aim and object of life of Yudhisthira rather than to attempt accomplishment anyhow by sheer machinations or otherwise. For the sake of the sacred trust which the Almighty Father imposed in him as a king he gave up everything which others hold dear and sacred in order to be true to the ideal of self-denunciation in the midst of all sorts of allurements to which sovereignty was exposed.

His temptations and sacrifices could not be of an ordinary type, for Yudhisthira was the son of Dharma (Virtue) and not of God, like Christ; wherein lies the real difference between Hinduism and Christianity. His own god-father, Dharma (Virtue), was found testing him and adding

strength to his vigour and activities. Virtue in the form of a Jaksha killed his brothers, or the four attributes, to make him realise and to hear from him the answers to the questions put by Virtue to give him back the brothers or attributes duly renovated. This is what is called the soul vision of a man. It is only obtained when ordinary conditions are suspended and gone and they are re-established. The questions of knowledge and feeling were then united. Feeling is but an inference of anything and not direct knowledge. Inference is drawn from the descriptions of others. It is not the ecstatic state of soul lying side by side with the ordinary and regular sense of perfection.

In Yoga Philosophy the devotee tries to open his inner eye, closing the outer one, but in the case of Yudhisthira both eyes were open at the same time. His ecstacy was involved in a trance or hallucination. A man who has true knowledge of God speaks of divine things with that intimacy with which others speak of material things. God is not a question of conception but perception. The consciousness of God is unique. He is not an ordinary human being. His glory is reflected in the heart of man till it is revealed in his face and strength of mind. The appearance of man is not a descent from God above but an ascent from the beast man below. Yudhisthira is not a man belonging to any human race but is the ideal man as one sees him and so with all his brothers in respect of his qualities, personified as it were. Incarnation is a descent of the just God to the earth as a human being and its opposite theory is reflected in Yudhisthira and Sudarshana, who went to heaven in person, which neither Rama nor Balarama, incarnations of God, or Sri Krishna, God himself, could do.

It is after all the great question of the starting point of a real conception of God. Incarnation is but an explanation of the theory of evolution, but there is a great difference between incarnation and manifestation. Incarnation means that God is revealed in a cosmic process as distinct from the manifestation of natural objects from the lower parts to man in Hindu theology. It is not a question of setting up so many gods from trees, serpents, fishes, tortoise, boar, dwarf, axed-Rama, Rama with bow and arrow, ploughed Balarama and Sri Krishna. The final emancipation of soul rests with the question not of personal love and ambition of things or incarnation holding power under the name of universal love, but of raising the Pandavas to the throne of India with Yudhisthira at their head to represent the incarnation of virtue and not of God in the presence and guidance of Divine love manifested in Sri Krishna, who was not an incarnation of God but God himself of divine love, That divine love has its counterpart in Nature is reflected in

Draupadi, the queen of the earth, the great Lakshmi or prosperity which sustain the great redeemers, the Pandavas.

The form of incarnation is merely a cloak to disguise the real personality. Virtue is disguised in Yudhisthira. Theism recognises that the logic of fact is more imperative than that of theory. It recognises something divine in every man and woman in the past and present. It believes that the human being is in the process of becoming ideal, which his nature prophesies. It seeks to establish a sort of union between ideal man or woman and God. The conception of God is traced in magnified humanity. This may be true in some respect, but one cannot deny that spiritual experience is of greater value than this. The experience of the soul is as real as that of the body and senses. The sun and the earth are the centres of planetary movements and of gravity, determining the movements of all bodies within the area of each of its influences. In the case of man the will is the centre. Man's character is merely dependent on the internal influences; the power of the will regulates external influences. The individuality of a man or a woman is not determined solely either by what one is represented to be by his body or by external influences but by all the movements, proceeding as they do from and returning to one independent centre called self, constantly modified in the process of action.

In the higher evolution of man and woman the emergence of a moral ideal is an imperative stage in the process of humanity. This doctrine is a helpful means to the rise of animal propensities into the sphere of moral and spiritual existence. It helped to abhor sin and sinful desires and expiate the sins of previous or present lives in the religious ceremonies and sacrifices the great priests advised. It helped the priestly power to be preserved by the easy method of participating in the gifts of confession and to rise higher in the estimation of the cultured class. Till at last religion and morality for their individual vitality depended on the real distinction between the individual self (Atma) and the supreme self (Parmatma).

A painting depends on the variety of colours in delineating the characters it represents. The Pandavas are no more than prismatic colours, all resolvable into the single ray of white light of virtue of Yudhisthira. The prism of the great Epic which separates them is as much a reality as the single ray of light and the differences, therefore, are equally real.

The urge of nature is not to satisfy the senses but to seek the unity of individual self with the supreme self through the selfish prism of

love which separates the divine love of Sri Krishna through the union of Draupadi. At the end Yudhisthira alone emerged from the great illusions to rise in heaven in the single ray of divine light of Heavenly love, and the prism of earthly love represented in Draupadi's union broke with the four Pandavas and disappeared for ever.

There is the truth in it, but its adoption as a historical fact means the destruction and not the preservation of both morality and religion. Gospels are not biographies in the true sense of the word ; they are but character sketches, and as such they are of the greatest value to arrive at a clear conception of virtue in the personality of Yudhisthira. The divine light was his guide and the question of historical criticism lies outside the scope of the Indian Epic. The reflected light of faith is of greater value to theology than the light of facts of history. The story of Walter Raleigh's destruction of his History of the World may be the fitting illustration and reply to the ungenerous critic.

The Pandavas were born Kshatriyas and so was Sri Krishna, but they were least like what one can call a born Kshatriya of the time. They were not imbued with any hatred of the Brahmanas or of any class in particular. They were most distinctly cosmopolitan. The Pandavas caught the spirit of the master mind of Sri Krishna and formed eternal friendship through the marriage union of Draupadi, not in the ordinary sense of an earthly marriage but of spiritual union. One may not realise its true import, but the Indian mass instinctively bow down in the deepest reverence of which they are capable before the moral and spiritual grandeur of such a union. The system of marriage which was called Svayambara was most distinctly cosmopolitan and interpreted the mind of the age in which it flourished. In Epic the moral grandeur of Sri Krishna transfixes and transfuses earthly love into Divinity. He came to the world in the prison life of his parents. His life was at the mercy of a tyrant, but he was rescued by his father by divine instinct. He grew up under the fostering care of Nanda and Joshoda, the adopted parents.

The hero of the Epic, Yudhisthira, went to heaven in person, which Sri Krishna and Arjuna could not do. To declare that the Pandavas and Draupadi were ordinary human beings is to leave out those very important characteristics introduced to explain the mysteries of Nature and God in the spiritual domain of existence. Their supreme places in the religious life of Ancient India transcend every other consideration, and it was for that they were not begotten but made by the Epic authors through the help of gods according to the ideals which found

favour in their time. It must be understood that the newer theological thought has by no means repudiated the facts presented in the personalities of the Pandavas and their queen, but they freely accepted the hypothesis of evolution with the important proviso that for the process which the theory of evolution describes, the God which the religious consciousness perceives is demanded and conceived for the emancipation of the Soul in the case of the four Pandavas and Draupadi and transmission in person to hold union with the supreme soul of God in Heaven. These are the two sides of emancipation, and the third translation to Heaven in the cruel fight of passion in the religious field of Kurukshettra to absolve the sins of commission and omission on the parts of chivalrous but vain-glorious Bhisma, Drona, Karna and Durjodhana. The advice of the wise man Yudhisthira is the ethics of morality and love preached in the great Epic, a fact which should not be lost sight of.

"Yudhisthira said :—Having entered into such a pledge in the presence of all the pious and good men, who can now dare break it for the sake of a kingdom in this world? For in my opinion to a respectable person death is not more serious than an act of transgression in order to gain a kingdom. O hero, you desired to burn my hand at the time of the play; you were, however, prevented by Arjuna and you only squeezed your mace. O Bhima, if you had done it, this calamity could not then befall us. O Bhima, conscious as you are of your prowess, why did you not say so before we entered into such an agreement? Having already burdened myself with the pledge made at that time what is the use of your speaking to me these harsh words now? O Bhimasena, this was my great grief that I could not do anything when I saw Jagmaseni (Draupadi) persecuted in that way. O Bhima, my heart burns on account of this, as if I have drunk some poisonous liquid. O foremost of the Bharata race, having made the pledge in the presence of the Kurus there, I am unable now to violate it. Wait for the return of our better days, as scatterers of seed wait for the harvest. When one that has been first injured succeeds in revenging himself upon his enemy at a time when the latter's enmity has borne fruits and flowers, he is regarded as one who has accomplished a great deed by his prowess. Such a brave man earns undying fame. Such a man obtains great prosperity. His enemies bow down to him, and his friends gather round him, as the celestials cluster round Indra for protection. Know my promise cannot be made false. I regard Dharma as superior to life itself and divinity. Kingdoms, sons, fame and wealth, all these do not come up even to a sixteenth part of truth." *

Nor is this all. The lesson he read to his beloved accomplished wife Draupadi should be written in golden letters for it discloses the aim of the virtuous man. How a man is led by a woman to transgress the law of God is vividly described, which even Milton failed to do:—

"Yudhisthira said :—O Yajmaseni, your speech is sweet, clear and full of nice expressions; we have listened to it; you speak of atheism. O Princess, I never act being desirous of the fruits thereof; I distribute a thing which should be distributed and I perform a sacrifice which should be performed. I perform, as best as I can, O Krishna, what a house-holder should do, not caring for the fruits of virtue but for not

* The Mahabharata, Vana Parva, Chapter XXXIV. Verses 15-22, pp. 52 53.

transgressing the Vedas and seeing the conduct of the pious. My mind and nature, O Krishna, are naturally bent upon virtue; that vile trader of virtue, the worst of the virtuous, who wishes to reap the fruits of virtue, does never obtain them; nor does a vicious minded person, for his scepticism, who doubts a virtuous act, having accomplished it." . "You should not, O blessed queen, with a foolish mind either doubt or censure the Providence or (His act). The fool, who doubts religion and disregards virtue and being proud of the proof of his own reasoning, does not receive it from others, considers all these sages who look upon the future as present, like a mad man. He considers the external world as conducive to the gratification of senses and is blind to everything else ".. "Doubt not, O Krishna, the ancient religion which is followed by the good and formulated by the omniscient and omnipotent Rishis. O Draupadi, virtue is the only raft and nothing else to those who wish to go to heaven, like a ship to the merchant wishing to cross the ocean."..."For not seeing the fruit you should not doubt religion or the gods; you should perform sacrifices assiduously and charities without any insolence. Acts have their fruits in this world and virtue is eternal; as said by Kashyapa, Dharma told all this to his sons. O Krishna, let your doubt be destroyed like dews meditating upon all this. Let your scepticism yield to faith. Do not speak ill of God who is the lord of all creatures; learn to know Him; bow to Him; let not your understanding be such. Never disregard that Supreme being, O Krishna, by whose mercy the mortals, by pious observances, become immortals. *"

Yudhisthira's reply to Bhima's expostulations breathes the spirit of wisdom and truth as well as his great character. He was not a coward as ordinary people would take him to be finding him an idle spectator of the rude persecution of his beloved wife before his very eyes at the hands of his enemies.

"Yudhisthira said :—O descendant of Bharata, O mighty armed hero, what you say is true. O best of speakers, listen (also) to what I say. O descendant of Bharata, O Bhimasena, the greatly sinful deeds that one wants to perform depending only on his courage become a source of pain to him. But O mighty-armed hero, whatever is performed with (due) deliberation, with well-directed prowess, with all (necessary) appliances and with much previous thought, is (always) seen to be successful (at the end). The celestials themselves favour such acts. Hear something about the act which you think should be at once done from your pride of strength and restlessness of mind Bhurisrava Salya, the powerful Jarasandha, Bhisma, Drona, Karana, the mighty son of Drona (Ashwathama). The invincible sons of Dhritarastra, Durjodhana and others,—all are accomplished in arms and ever ready for battle. Those kings and rulers of the world, who have been injured by us, have all taken the side of the Kurus; and their affection has grown towards them. O descendant of Bharata, they are engaged in seeking to do good to Durjodhana and not to us. With their treasury full and army large, they will try their best in the war (to defeat us). All the officers of the Kuru army with their sons and relatives have been hono red by Durjodhana with the presentation of wealth according to proper divisions These heroes have been much honoured by Durjodhana. My firm conviction is that they will give their lives in battle for him. O mighty-armed hero, though the behaviour of Bhisma, Drona and the high-souled Kripa is the same (to both parties), yet it is my firm conviction that they would sacrifice in battle

* The Mahabharata, Vana Parva. Chapter XXXI, p. 45, Verses 1—6, 15—17, 23, 24 and 38—42.

their lives, than which there is nothing dearer in this world, so that they might pay off (their debt) in the shape of royal favours which they enjoy. They are all masters in celestial weapons and they are all devoted to virtue. My opinion is that they cannot be vanquished even by the celestials with Vasava (Indra) at their head. There is Karna, the great car-warrior, who is impetuous, ever angry, invincible, accomplished in all weapons and encased in impenetrable armour. Without first defeating in battle all these foremost of men, you cannot, unaided as you are, kill Durjodhana."*

" To say well is good, but to do well is better;
Do well is the spirit, and to say well is the letter;
If do well and say well were fitted in one frame,
All were won, all were done, and got were all the gain."

The example of constancy in every act of Yudhisthira confirmable to reason, his evenness in all things, his absolute disregard of empty fame, his serenity of countenance to realise the depth of things and the pros and cons of every matter, invested him with the crown of piety and justice. What greater reward can a mortal man seek than doing what is good and just to the world at large as to himself and to be blessed with peace of mind, an inestimable boon. It is the rich reward of duty fulfilled. The goddess of prosperity tried him to see if he were a man wishing for nothing but to be crowned with glory by any means just as at the games of Olympia. Riches and kingdom bring in their train a sort of danger, temptation, sin and trouble. The wise Solomon said: "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." This self-control is the real monarchy of the spiritual world with which the ancient Hindu world was more concerned than with the material sphere of actions. Success in thyself is the best of all, says the well-known old Norse balled. Vyasa's conception of the eternal man (Dharma) is Yudhisthira, and Draupadi is the incarnation of Maya, the creator of the moral and spiritual world.

The conduct of Durjodhana and the counsel of his friend Karna have amply proved that there was nothing more daring than ignorance. Riches are blind and those who set their hearts on them are rendered blind as well, for love of money is a kind of disease. The love of pleasure is at the root of it and makes man despicable. The gift of God is not riches, as lay people are made to believe, but intellect. It is said in the words of Vidura, the wise minister of the Kuru Court who was referred to in the table of contents as famous for his wisdom.

"The Gods do not look after men with club in hands, like herdsmen. To those they want to protect, they give intelligence. In proportion as a man is inclined towards virtue, his wishes meet with success. There is no doubt about it."†

* The Mahabharata, Chapter XXXVI, Vana Parva, page 54, verses 5–19

† The Mbh. Udyoga Parva, Chapter XXXV, verses 40-41.

No better example of a foolish son and a blind father not correcting him can be found than that of Durjodhana and Dhritarastra, which the great Epic furnishes. How then can it be a work reciting the glory of the Kurus? The ethics of morality according to the saying of the wise Vidura, are as follows (quoted from the same chapter) :—

"Gold is known by fire, one of good birth by his behaviour, an honest man by his conduct, a hero in times of panic, a patient man during the time of poverty, and friends and enemies during the seasons of difficulties and dangers. Old age destroys beauty; patience, hope; death, life; envy, virtue; passion, prosperity; association with the vulgar, good manners, lust, modesty; vanity, every-thing. Prosperity has for its source good deeds; it increases owing to activity, and takes root owing to skill, and continues its existence owing to self-control. Eight qualities glorify a man, *viz.*, wisdom, good birth, self restraint, learning, strength, littleness of speech, gift to the best of his power and gratitude. But, O dear, one thing alone can make all these great qualities come together. When a king honours a man, all the qualities shed lustre on him. These eight, O king, in this world of human beings, are considered as the marks of heaven. Of these, four are the attributes of the good; and the honest men follow the other four. Sacrificial ceremonies, gifts, study, and devotion,—these four are followed by the good. Self control, truth, kindness and humanity—these four are also the attributes of the good. Sacrificial ceremonies, study, gift, devotion, truth, forgiveness, mercy, and contentment—these are the eight ways to virtue, according to the Smriti. The first four of these may be followed from motives of vanity; but the last four do not exist in those that are not great. That one is not an assembly where there are no old men. Those are not old men who do not speak of virtue. That is not virtue where truth does not exist; and that is not truth where deceit pervades. Truth, beauty, learning, knowledge, good-birth, good manners, strength, wealth, heroism, and ability to talk on diverse topics,—these ten have their origin in heaven"..."He that assimilates the wisdom of the wise is himself wise; and he who is wise by doing acts, both virtuous and conducive to worldly benefits, succeeds in gaining happiness. That act should be done by one during the day, which will enable him to live in comfort during the night; and that should be done in eight months which will enable one to live in comfort throughout the year. That act should be done during the early years of life, which will enable one to live in comfort during old age. That act should be done in this life which will enable one to live in happiness after death. People speak well of that food which has been digested. They speak well of that wife whose youth has passed away, and of that hero who has come off victorious in the battle, and of that ascetic who has gone over to the other side (of life). The hole, that one seeks to stop by wealth acquired by foul means, remains uncovered; and others come into existence in other places. The preceptor is the controller of those who have their souls under restraint; the king is the controller of those who have bad souls; and Yama, the son of Vivaswata, is the controller of those who sin in secret. The greatness of Rishis, of rivers, of the banks of rivers, and of the noble-minded cannot be conceived, as also the wickedness of a woman. One attached to the worship of the twice-born, one that makes gifts, one who behaves generously towards his cousins and the Kshatriya of good manners, rules the earth for ever. These three, *viz.*, the brave, the wise, and those who know how to protect others, pluck flowers of gold from the earth. Acts performed by means of the intellect are the best; those performed by the arms come next; O Bharata, those by the thighs are bad; while those performed by carrying loads are the worst. Having entrusted your

kingdom to Durjodhana, Shakuni, and the fool Dusasana and Karna, how can you hope for prosperity? The Pandavas, who are possessed of every virtue, O best among the race of Bharata, depend on you as their father. Do you also depend on them as your sons.*"

He who fights against the decrees of wisdom, adds nothing but annoyances and misery to life, but he who follows the path of the wise and labours diligently, is hardly ever disappointed. The wise Vidura cited an old discourse immediately after it which has a great bearing on the mystery of the plot as well as on the secret tenets of religion to try the virtuous. One can then realise the difference between the contending character of the Kurus and the Pandavas ; the one party was openly reviling the other—the other bore them patiently. This is the discourse of the son of Atri to the Saddhyas or Devas in Chapter XXXVI, Udyoga Parva, verses 4—21. This is the ideal with which Yudhisthira scored success and went to heaven in person. If anything goes against it, it must be an interpolation. For instance, Yudhisthira did not tell a lie in the death of Drona even in thought. Drona did not die leaving his arms with the false report of his son's death, having heard it from the mouth of Yudhisthira. It was a base manufacture of a foolish dramatist and proof is not wanting. Krishna, who was the eye-witness, described the battle before his father which cannot but be true and unvarnished.

"In that battle between Drona and the son of Prishata, the kings assembled from various realms were nearly rooted out. That furious battle lasted for five days. At the conclusion of that period, Drona, exhausted, succumbed to Dhrishtadyumna."†

How then can Mahabharata be a work meant to recite the glory of the Kurus, and how did the Pandavas win the battle by foul means? Who can be happy without hard labour and application? Men are not taught virtue and a love of independence in the court life of a royal home or throne, and it is for this the heroes of the two Indian Epics were exiled. What they learnt by actual experience was put into practice in their government to make their subjects happy and dutiful, if not religious. Nature brings good out of evil, and if one expunges from one's life unhappy experiences then the relish of the enjoyment of happiness will be frustrated. Happiness is the fruit of forbearance and patience, and the life of the Pandavas and Rama bear ample testimony to it. The great English poem "Paradise Lost" begins with that idea.

"Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world and all our woe .. "

* The Mbh. Udyoga Parva, Chapter XXXV, Verses 49—59 and 66—77.

† The Mbh., Chapter LX, Ashvamedha Parva, verses 17-18., p. 72.

Prudence and forethought are roots from which the good and virtuous eliminate sin and passion.

"'Tis a physic
That's bitter to sweet end."
(" Measure for Measure' Act IV, Scene 6.)

"Sweet are the uses of adversity;
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head".
("As You Like It," Act II, Scene I.)

So Shakespeare said, and Vyasa illustrated it in the characters of the Pandavas. Yudhisthira blushed several times as a good and honourable character full of fortitude and forethought and he was praised by the wise Vidura for his wonderful conduct at the dice play. That was one of the hardest examinations which Yudhisthira passed with credit, and Vidura gave him a certificate of great merit. The main object of the dice play was exposed in his words:—

"Vidura said:—O Yudhisthira, O best of the Bharata race, know this to be my opinion that he who is defeated by sinful means need not be pained for such defeat. You know every rule of Dharma. Dhananjaya (Arjuna) is ever victorious in battle. Bhimasena is the slayer of foes. Nakula is the gatherer of wealth. Sahadeva has administrative talents, Dhaumya is the best of all men learned in the Vedas, and the virtuous Draupadi is learned in Dharma and Artha. You are all attached to one another and you all feel delight at one another's presence: enemies cannot separate you from one another, and you are all contented. O descendant of Bharata, for this patient abstraction from the worldly possessions will be of great benefit to you. No enemy, even if he be like Sakra (Indra), will be able to stand it. You were instructed on the mountains of Himalaya by Meru-Savarni. You were instructed in Varanavata by Krishna Dwaipayana (Vyasa); on the Vrigu mountain by Rama, on the banks of the Drisadwati by Sambhu (Siva). You have also received instructions from the great Rishi Asita on the Anjana mountains. You became a disciple of Bhrigu on the banks of the Kalmashi. Narada and your this priest Dhaumya will be now your instructors. Do not abandon the excellent lessons, ever adored by the Rishis, as regards the next world O sons of Pandu, you surpass in intelligence even Pururava, the son of Ila; in strength all other kings, and in virtue even the Rishis. Resolve earnestly to win the victory which is the attribute of Indra, to control anger which is the attribute of Yama, to give in charity which is the attribute of Kuvera, and to control all passions which is the attribute of Varuna. Obtain the power of gladdening from the moon, the power of sustaining all from the water, forbearance from earth, energy from the whole of the solar disc, strength from the winds, and affluence from the creatures. Welfare and immunity from disease be yours. I hope to see you return (in all safety). O Yudhisthira, act properly and duly in all seasons—in the time of distress, in that of difficulty, and in respect of everything. O son of Kunti, O descendant of Bharata, with our permission depart Blessings be on you. None can say that you have done anything sinful before. We hope to see you return in safety and crowned with success.'"*

* The Mahabharata, Shabha Parva, Chapter LXXVIII, verses 9—23

In Yudhisthira the theory and practice of morality were united. He was courageous and brave as a lion and timid as a hare as occasion demanded—the two contrary things reconciled in him and dignified him as worthy of divinity in his life time. He was a man who did no one any mischief or injury though quite able to do so if he liked. He was not a man to retaliate for any wrongs gratituously inflicted upon him. He depended on Heaven for justice and guidance like a husbandman, who when met with a bad year did not give up the profession but depended upon the next year for reparation. In Hindu ideals brothers are co-operators and Rama had such bretheren and Yudhisthira was equally blessed with such brothers.

In Hindu ideals woman is the swallow of a spring of prosperity, and Draupadi was such a woman. The Pandavas were discovered resurrected as it were from the tragedy of the lac house to the utter amazement of the conspirators at the Svayambara Hall. The Pandavas established their claims to the paternal throne by the feats of their arms to defeat the assembled monarchs and eventually ruled the earth with glory and chivalry. What a curious transformation in the current Mahabharata seems to be made by dramatists. Old things become new again in the course of time. There is nothing which can continue to please all men in all times. How radically bad is the nature of man, for otherwise he would stand in need of no laws to restrain him.

Every man is the maker of his own fortune. A man can govern and control all physical influences if he is endowed with forethought and determination. He is not merely a creature of circumstance, fate or a slave to time. The true dignity of a man lies in the consciousness that he can grasp the revolving wheel of fortune or time and free himself from the chain that binds him to it. Such a man was Yudhisthira, whereas Durjodhana depended on the powers of others and he could not avoid acting differently, as he did, under the circumstances. The mere reality of life without the charm of fancy would be devoid of zest to Durjodhana. It brought within his breast many vain fears and idle hopes which called up the gay, flattering hue of a rainbow rather than any terror of consequences. He never knew or tried to accommodate himself in such a way as would give him peace and cheerfulness instead of anxiety and trouble. He knew nothing of that resignation and contentment to which Yudhisthira was used. How then can the Mahabharata be a work reciting the glory of the Kurus?

The gross misconduct of Durjodhana could not be overlooked and he was taken to task even by Dhritarastra.

"Dhritarastra said:, O wicked-minded Durjodhana, O wretch, destruction has already overtaken you when you insult in such language a wife of the Kuru chiefs, — especially this wedded wife Draupadi."*

How then can the great Epic be meant to recite the glory of the Kurus ?. The great author of the great Epic did not allow his heroes and heroines to shed tears over their misfortunes after the dice play, but the enemies were dumbfounded by their unconcernedness and natural phenomena made Dhritarastra appeal to Draupadi to take boons from him to right the great wrong. How then can the great Epic be a work for reciting the glory of the Kurus ? Durjodhana hid himself in the lake house, perhaps built purposely for any untoward event, when all the best Generals on whom he relied were killed and chance of victory was gone. That was the suicide of chivalry and glory of Durjodhana and to allow such a man to live would be a slur and setting a bad example to the future generation of kings of India and it was for this Yudhisthira did not comply with the request of Durjodhana to spare his life. He called upon him to fight with anyone he chose and the issue of the battle would be decided accordingly.

This was a great bait and he agreed to fight the great adversary of his youth, Bhima, whom he envied for his great strength and whom he could not destroy in his youth after many attempts. He was defeated and killed, but even to make the death a little dramatic the appointment of Asvathama to destroy the Pandavas so that he could hear of it before his death was made. The cruel deeds of Asvathama and Kripa in the dead of night as followers of Saiva to undo the works of Krishna, of gagging the heroes who killed Drona and others while sleeping in their camps, were not consistent with the rules and canons of the Ancient Indian Military Code of War and precedence. It could only be possible as an instance of a heinous crime. How then can the great Epic be a work reciting the glory of the Kurus ?

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things" — Philippians iv, 8

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life."—James i. 12.

*The Mahabharata, Shabha Parva, Chapter LXXI, verse 25,

Draupadi.

> "O woman! lovely woman! nature made thee
> To temper man; we had been brutes without you.
> Angels are painted fair, to look like you:
> There's in you all that we believe of Heaven;
> Amazing brightness, purity, and truth,
> Eternal joy, and everlasting love."
> (Thomas Otway's "Venice Preserved." Act ii.)

The most novel and original creation of the Mahabharata is princess Draupadi. Her marriage with the five Pandavas has been the subject-matter of discussion in ancient Puran literature and is a veritable Sphinx-like riddle to the world. The picture of a cultured and high-souled princess sprung from an ancient royal family of Panchala, famous for chivalry and power, lofty and noble in her bearing, of the strictest chastity and holiness of character, intelligent and independent, courageous and indomitable alike as an Empress and as an exile in the fearful lonely woods, ever confident and optimistic from her upright and unblemished life, being the common wife of five brothers, has always puzzled both the Oriental and Occidental world. They have, in vain, ransacked everything and racked their brains to solve the riddle. In their attempts to do it, some have resorted to casuistry and sophistry, some to mythological mysticism, some to poetic creations, and some to bold imaginations of dramatic inventions.

Successive ages have made their contributions to the development of an unique heroine in the character of Draupadi, adding as it did, layer after layer of incongruous accretions in such a manner as to make it altogether fanciful and enigmatical, being—although there is no mention of any such heroine in the enumeration of characters in the original table of contents—in the nature of a forecast of all the principal *dramatis personae* (principal personages) of the great Epic.

Whatever influences might have gone to the making of this nonpariel character and whatever motives or imaginations might have accentuated it or found it so very necessary for reform in the great ideal of a princess worthy of occupying the place of an Empress of India, Draupadi stands pre-eminent as a master-creation of a model princess, an emblem of divine love and piety in flesh and blood as real as can be, representing as it were, the goddess of prosperity. She is an ideal Empress and housewife, whom the accredited heroine Kunti, her mother-in-law, cannot but admire—a tribute a daughter-in-law seldom gets in a Hindu

household. She is courageous and averse to servile submission to any unjust domination of the husband or his senior uncle or the king of a kingdom. She will not hesitate to question if Yudhisthira had the right to stake her at the dice play after having lost himself to slavery, but will gladly and patiently follow him to exile in the forests. She is meek and submissive, courageous and bold, as occasion demands. While in danger in the royal seraglio she seeks protection from the senior female members, but when she is exposed in the dice-play hall in the full limelight of the royal assemblage with the senior old Dhritarastra at the head, she boldly arraigns the august personages, questions the legality of their decision, politely insinuates their evil motives and gently rebukes them for their insensate conduct. A great heroine of a great Epic of India, she is the combination of all the good qualities of lofty womanhood, without even a distant parallel in any other literature of the world.

The great Indian Epic has shown her in three different aspects, the historical, the mythological and the dramatic. The nucleus of the historical aspect of the character of Draupadi is found in the story of her birth in the family of Panchala. The long-standing feud between the neighbouring kingdoms of the Kurus and the Panchals at the time of king Drupad became further accentuated for non-fulfilment of the promise between the two friends Drona and Drupad, made while they were pupils at their instructor's place. This eventually developed into a fight between the Panchals and Drona at the head of the Kurus. Drupad lost half his kingdom.

Bhisma and Drona are new creations of the dramatic Mahabharata. It was Bhisma who engaged the great Drona as the teacher of the Kuru and Pandava princes and became a king of the place called Ahichhatra, defeating Drupad with the help of those pupils and the Kuru army, secured through the instrumentality of Bhisma. It could not be so childish an affair as was described in the great Epic. Hastinapur became the centre of a military institution founded by Bhisma under the tutelage of Drona and Kripa. This Kripa was the son of Goutama and the daughter, Krepi, was the wife of Drona. The great warrior Asvathama was the son of Drona.

This is the cause of Draupadi's birth to recover the lost kingdom of Drupada. Draupadi was raised by a sacrifice as well as her brother Dhristadyumna to kill the Kurus and Drona, to wreak revenge as it were. Drupad, in order to recover it, performed a sacrifice and was blessed with two sons and a daughter, Draupadi, to achieve his object. Dhristadyumna and Shiknandi were the sons and Draupadi

was the only daughter, who, it is said, rose out of the sacrificial fire as it were, and was instrumental in destroying hosts of kings, including Drona, in the great war of Kurukshettra. Draupadi's Svayambara became the venue for the meeting of the Kurus and the Pandavas. The Pandavas were said to have been burnt in the dreadful fire at the lac house of Baranabata, but they were dramatically discovered by the Kurus before the royal assemblage. Not only was the guilt of the Kurus exposed before the royal assembly but they were defeated by the Pandavas in open fight inspite of the great help they had received from the powerful Kshatriya princes assembled there. Sri Krishna's words convinced the assembly that the Yadavas and the Panchalas had combined themselves by marriage to recover the kingdom for the Pandavas, who were sought to be destroyed by the Kurus.

The love of Draupadi was the love of duty to save the country and recover the glory of her father, and for the good of the world. Draupadi was called Yajna-Seni, or the creative body of the acts of sacrifice, as she was said to have been born out of a sacrifice with the object of winning back the lost empire of Drupada, her father, king of Panchala. Krishna thought of making alliance with his relatives the Pandavas, who were sought to be destroyed by Durjodhana. They were all physically and intellectually strong, full of energy, ability and vigour and with a right title to the kingdom. Draupadi was the gift-horse with which the Pandavas' alliance with Drupada and Krishna was secured, and that was the real beginning of the great fight. The Pandavas revenged the lac house incidents at the Svayambara festival of Draupadi by meteing out blows and thrusts on Durjodhana and his friends, who made the lac house to destroy them, and secured the share of their paternal estate by the alliance of marriage with Draupadi.

Draupadi stood against the oriental idea that confinement in the ha rem and utter slavery are the moral duty of a virtuous princess. She converted the hell of the Dice Hall into an institution of justice, where the impugned holiness of her marriage was attacked with ridicule and the divine demonstration of evil omens at the persecution of the good lady and the virtuous Pandavas roused emotions in the blind man, Dhritarastra. Side by side with the great wrong of insulting the declared empress at the Rajsuya sacrifice, as a member of the royal household, in a manner against all rules and canons of the Ancient Royal court of the Kurus, Draupadi censored the whole assembly and brought to light that a princess of royal blood had to declare false the report of a marriage with the five Pandavas in as much as she was called upon to appear upon the political scene on a charge of snatching the

Empire with her marriage whereas it was won by the energy of the Pandavas.

These are great events, not without great significance to the ancient history of India. The possession of Draupadi by the Pandavas is the root of all trouble and the great war. The disappointment of the kings of India at the Svayambara ceremony of Draupadi and the crowning glory of the Pandavas in the death of Jarasandha, the great enemy of Sri Krishna, who thus secured the first place of worship in the great Rajasuya sacrifice, was the origin of the great war.

The mythological aspect of the character of Daraupadi is fully represented in her marriage, which was quite contrary to the customs and laws of the country at that time. The Pandavas were either made demi-gods or the self-differentiating unity* of Indra, king of Heaven, in mythology. Draupadi's prayer five times for a husband gave her one husband in five persons. This is the poetic licence spoken of in the Rig Veda (10/114/5).

"Polyandric customs became abhorrent to the Brahmanas. The Brahmana justify Draupadi's position, however, on the ground that as the five Pandava bretheren were divinely begotten emanations from one deity, they formed in reality only one person, and could be lawfully married to the same woman. No such afterthought was required to uphold the honour of Draupadi in the age when the legend took its rise. Throughout the whole Mahabharata she figures as the type of a highborn princess, and a chaste, brave, and faithful wife." †

Draupadi married the incarnation of Justice (Dharma), Yudhisthira, and the other brothers were his ancilliary adjuncts of Justice, as it were. The five airs, the vital spirits of life, and their internal relation with the soul are explained in the Yoga system of philosophy, with which some interpret the Pandavas' marriage with Draupadi, and Krishna represents the soul, the great friend and relation. Draupadi is the material body on which the five spiritual airs seem to play important parts. This may be interesting, but is not a fact. The relation of the five airs and the relation of the body and the soul are given by the said Dharmabyadha or fowler of religion as follows :—

"The fowler said:—The vital spirit manifesting itself inside the conciousness causes the action of the corporeal frame. The soul being present in both of these acts. The past, the present and the future are inseparably associated with the soul. It is the highest of the possessions of all creatures. It is the essence of Supreme Spirit and we adore it. It is the animating principle of all creatures, it is the eternal Purusha. It is great,—it is the intelligence and it is the Ego, it is the seat of all elements. Thus while seated here (in the corporeal form), it is sustained in all its external or internal relations by the subtle eternal air called Prana and afterwards each creature goes its own way by the action of another subtle air called Samana. This (Samana)

*Sauparna.

†Sir W. W. Hunter's "Indian Empire," page 164.

transforming itself to Apana air, and, supported by the head of the stomach, carries the refuse matter of the body, such as urine, etc, to the kidneys and intestines. It is present in the three elements of actions, exertion and power, and then in that state it is called Udana by men learned in the physical science. When it manifests itself by its presence at all the junctional points of the system, it is known by the name of Vyana. The internal heat is diffused over all the tissues of our system and supported by these kinds of air, it transforms our food and the tissues and the humours of our system. By the coalition of Prana and other airs, a reaction ensues and the heat generated thereby is known as the internal heat of the human system which causes digestion of food. The Prana and the Apana airs are interposed within the Samana and the Udana airs. The heat generated by their coalition causes the growth of the body. That portion of its seat extending to as far as the rectum, is called Apana and from that, arteries arise in the five airs Prana. Prana acted on by the heat, strikes against the extremity of the Apana region, and then recoiling, it reacts on the heat. Above the navel is the region of undigested food and below it, the region of digestion. Prana and all other airs of the system are seated in the navel. The arteries issuing from the heart run upwards and downwards and also in oblique directions, they carry the best essence of our food and are acted upon by the ten Prana airs. This is the way, by which go to the highest state, the Yogis who have overcome all difficulties, who are patient and self-controlled and who have their souls seated in their brains. The Prana and Apana are thus present in all creatures. Know that the soul is embodied in the corporeal disguise, in the eleven alloteopus conditions (of the animal system) and that though eternal, its normal state is apparently modified by its accompaniments even like the fire purified in its pan,—eternal yet with its course altered by its surroundings; and that the divine thing which is kindred with the body is related to the latter in the same way as a drop of water to the sleek surface of a lotus leaf on which it rolls; know that Satva Raja and Tama are the attributes of all life. Life is the attribute of spirit and spirit again is the attribute of the Supreme Soul. Inert and insensible matter is the seat of the living principle which is active in itself and induces activity in others. That by which the seven worlds are incited to action is called the most high by men of high spiritual insight. Thus in all these elements the eternal spirit does not show itself, but is perceived by the learned in spiritual science by reason of their high and keen perception. A pure-minded man, by purifying his heart, is able to destroy the good and evil effects of his actions and obtains eternal bliss by the enlightenment of his inner spirit. This state of peace and purification of heart is likened to the state of a person who, in a cheerful state of mind, sleeps soundly or to the brilliance of a lamp trimmed by a skilful hand. Such a pure-minded man living on frugal diet perceives the supreme spirit reflected in his own mind, and by practising concentration of mind in the evening and early in the morning, sees the Supreme Spirit which has no attributes, in the light of his heart, shining like a dazzling lamp and thus he obtains salvation. Avarice and anger must be subdued by all means, for this constitutes the most sacred virtue that people can practise. It is considered to be the means by which men cross over to the other side of this sea of misery and pain. A man must preserve his virtue, being overcome by anger, his righteousness by pride, his learning by vanity and his soul by illusion. Leniency is the best of virtues, and forbearance is the best of powers; the knowledge of the spirit is the best of all knowledge and truthfulness is the best of religious vows. To tell the truth is good and the knowledge of truth also is good, but what conduces to the greatest good of all creatures is known as the highest truth. He whose actions are performed not with the object of securing any reward or blessings, who has sacrificed all to the requirements

of his renunciation is a real Sanyasi and is really wise. Communion with Brahma cannot be taught to us even by our spiritual preceptor; he can only give us a clue to the mystery; renunciation of things of the material world is called Yoga. We must not do harm to any creature and must live in amity with all. In this our present existence we must not avenge ourselves on any creature. Self-abnegation, peace of mind, renunciation of hope, and equanimity, these are the ways by which spiritual enlightenment can always be secured. The knowledge of self is the best of all knowledge. In this world as well as in the next, renouncing all worldly desires and assuming a stolid indifference, in which all suffering is at rest, people should fulfil their religious duties with the aid of their intelligence. The Rishi who desires to obtain salvation, which is very difficult to obtain, must always perform austerities, must be forbearing, self-controlled and must give up that longing fondness which binds him to the things of the earth. The attributes that are perceptible in us become non-attributes in him. He is not bound by anything. He is perceptible only by the expansion and development of our spiritual vision. As soon as the illusion of ignorance is dispelled, this supreme and unalloyed bliss is obtained. By foregoing the objects of both pleasure and pain and by renouncing the feeling which binds him to the things of the earth, one attains to Brahma."*

Vyasa's conception of the eternal man (Dharma) is Yudhisthira and Draupadi is the incarnation of Maya. The Hindu creation is the work of Maya, or Love. The origin of love has led the philosophers of Ancient India to connect it with the creation, and Adya Sakti Uma, the consort of Siva, or Lakshmi of Narayana, either of them is represented. Love at first is like a mirage, the relation of a previous existence. Deep affection is of slow growth and it is won by deep devotion. Love must arise from the heart and not by constraint. The poets sang of it, and it is as mysterious as ever, it has no connection with flesh and blood. Love is the product of the highest culture in man and woman—it is not usually the fruit of a marriage. Love gives an instinctive insight into the human heart and defies distance and the elements. When the five elements of a man are exercised by a woman of love, then the real marriage takes place. This is the essence of Samkhya philosophic creation, which is interpreted by the poet in the marriage of Draupadi.

The marriage of Draupadi has direct and indirect relations in the Epic which have not as yet been seen. The original marriage ceremony took place with Yudhisthira, as the text testifies, but in philosophy it demonstrates the creation of the moral and spiritual world; that love, real love, cannot be personal but universal, and when it is so it unites men instead of separating them. The carnal love separates the brothers Sunda and Upasunda in the story of Tilottama and Bali and Sugriva. It is said in the Polish proverb that a woman draws more with a hair of her head than a yoke of oxen well-harnessed, but the ancient Hindus declare that the joy of home depends on a good wife and where the hearts of each are joined by the angel of happiness. Such a wife was

* The Mahabharata, Chapter CCXII, page 320, Vana Parva, verses 3—39.

Draupadi so far as the home comforts and unity of the Pandavas were concerned, and there she acted in such a-way that she did not make any difference between her husband Yudhisthira and his brothers—that was the illusion or Maya. The European poets sang and in their words the part Draupadi played may be said :—

"It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind
In body and in soul can bind."

(SCOTT).

"But to see her were to love her,
Love but her, and love for ever."

(BURNS).

"O that the desert were my dwelling place,
With one spirit for my minister,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, Love but only her."

(BYRON).

"Her feet are tender, for she sets her steps
Not on the ground, but on the heads of men."

(HOMER).

The great Pandavas represented the five important members of the body politic and Sri Krishna the spirit within, and Draupadi was the emblem of prosperity and love. The maintenance of the body does not depend entirely on material food and drink so much as on the spiritual. The spirit of intelligence of Sri Krishna and the love of Draupadi controlled the five senses of the body politic of Government to establish the true religion in India, which was struggling for existence in the great war amongst the followers of the great exponents of the six philosophies of India. The atheistical doctrine of Charvaka, the Epicurus of India, was the culmination of the breaking asunder of society and the religion of divine love.

The empiric sciences are the creations of time and the fetters forged upon men and women by customs and laws serve more to bind the mind than the soul securely to the influences of constellations, and propitiations form the principal duty of the modern age of the Hindus. They cannot realise the essence of love of Radha and Draupadi, which has direct reference to soul and something very divine. Draupadi was not so advanced as Sri Radha. Her soul was united with the five Pandavas and that was the marriage union of the souls, of Kunti with the four elements of the creation, Sun (fire), winds, Sky (Indra) and Earth (Dharma).

Death levels all things, but virtue it cannot touch. The excessive fury fails in its object. The joy of the wicked does not last long. Such was the case with the Kurus and their allies. The eyes and

footsteps of the master are the most salutary to the living, and that actually was the task imposed upon the great ideal god Sri Krishna, who was present in the great Epic as the master of the just side, the Pandavas, and the much persecuted Lakshmi Draupadi, who belonged to nobody alone but to the just and wise, and thus she was the consort of Yudhisthira. As leaves in a tree live only to enjoy love and join in mutual love with one another, so Draupadi is represented as the sustaining power of the Pandavas to comfort them in their miseries and not to make them blind with envy or passion. The most important function she was made to perform was as the housewife of the distressed Pandava brothers. Practice and experience are of the greatest moment in the arts of love and chastity. The great Epic demonstrates it beautifully in the lesson Draupadi gives to the wife of Krishna in Vana Parva, not yet appreciated by any of the European scholars or students of the great Epic, for the most important duty of a housewife is to know what is to be done according to the changing circumstances in the life of man*.

Draupadi is a novel creation. She shook off the unnatural domination of husband over wife on the question of social or religious ties or on the sham pretext of sex. She proved to the world that both sexes like to enjoy and not be enjoyed, and in that sense she was called the wife of the Pandavas, to which she did not object on the political ground of benefitting them in the recovery of their lost kingdom and glory. There she was the deity of prosperity to the Pandavas, to whom they were wedded. Her function was to serve the Pandavas in soul not in body through the senses. If her senses ever enjoyed anybody it was the emblem of virtue, Yudhisthira. Sri Radha was a subsequent development of Draupadi.

In the days of Buddhistic ascendancy and Tibetan invasion in India, the universal popularity of the Indo-Aryan Epic tempted them to introduce their own customs and practices into the Epic. The Tibetan influence and taste can easily be traced in the popular Ramlila play and entertainment in the North-Western Provinces and Behar. The dramatic interpolation in the introduction of a character of the beautiful heroine of the Mahabharata being the actual physical and *defacto* common wife of the five Pandava brothers must have been the work of a learned Tibetan Sanskrit scholar. They tried to introduce their customs and manners by weaving them indistinguishably into its fabric and texture, to have the hall mark of the Epic and its recital and performance in public entertainments in Bengal. The symbol worship in Tantra adopted by the Buddhas had been incorporated into the

*(See) Mahabharata, Chapter CCXXXII.

Hindu system of worship, not with hands and feet but with di tinctive marks in the fashion of masonic symbols. Haen Tsang, the Buddhist Chinese traveller, found Benares and Gaya, once held in so great esteem with the legends of Buddha's life, had already then become the centres of the Hindu faith. The Buddhistic Trimurti was converted into Jaggannath, Subhadra and Balarama, the three interesting characters of the Epic united in one.

There was a very great Tibetan influence in India and the great Epic was transformed during Tibetan rule. Lt.-Col. Waddell contributed a valuable article on the Tibetan Invasion of India in 647 A.D. and the historian Vincent Smith said that Arjuna, the minister of Emperor Harsavardhana and the usurper of his throne, could not reign but was taken as a prisoner to China after his defeat.* The Tibetan historian Taranath gives an account of the Pala Dynasty in Bengal. Gopal, the founder of that dynasty, suffered defeat at the hands of Vatsaraja of Gurjara, king of Bhinmal. In 760 A.D. a number of kings under the names of Krishna and Govinda reigned. Krishna was famous for the Rock Kailash Temple at Ellore in the Nizam's Dominions. His sons Govinda and Dhruva Nirupama succeeded their father. The latter prided himself on his defeat of Vatsaraja, the above referred to Gurjara king, whom he despoiled of two white umbrellas taken from the king of Bengal, then called Gauda. And last though not least, the ground for ascribing Tibetan influence in the great Epic is that Tibetian maxims are found to be identical with those of the Epics.

"The Ten Faults.—Want of faith in religious books, disrespect for teachers, unpleasant conduct, covetousness, talking too much, laughing at another's misfortune, using abusive language, getting angry with old people, robbing and pilfering. The Eight Acts of Lowborn men.—Improvidence, using coarse language, disrespect, boasting, making big eyes or staring, loose conduct, coarse manners and stealing. The Nine Follies.—Praising oneself, coveting another's wife, having no wife, conferring power on one's wife, cursing a well-wisher, borrowing things which one cannot return, not cherishing one's brothers, ignorance of right and wrong, coveting the things of others. Talk regarding Religion and the cause and effect of deeds should only be spoken into the ears of clever monks; tales of worldly misery and joys should only be spoken into the ears of relatives and friends. The Roots of Quarrels are three, namely: Yes! (assertion) What! (doubting sarcasm) and You! (abuse). The kite quarrels and fights with other birds, the horse with the yak, the weasel with the snake, the crow with the owl, as these are enemies through their actions in former existences."†

The Mousol Parva of the Mahabharata gives a picture of the history of the Yadava family; Sri Krishna's exploits were recast and revised at the time of his descendants or devotees, who adopted such

* Page 367.

† Professor Waddell's "Lhasa and Its Mysteries," page 210.

names as auspicious. History proves the time of revision and additions to the original Epic. It seems possible that the dramatic revision took place in Bengal during the Tibetan supremacy in India for the obvious reason that the drama Beni Samhara by Bhattanarayan, who was brought from Kanouj and settled in Gour, was written in Bengal. It is Tibetan influence which made Draupadi the wife of the five Pandavas, Kunti and Madhabi of four gods and kings, respectively. It is Tibetan influence which introduced the Rakshasas in the two Epics instead of Asuras. The beauties of the Hill tribes Apsaras and Gandharvas of Gandhar (Candahar) and Kashmira were not left out of consideration to make the dramas attractive and appealing to the audience.

Dr. Holtzman first propounded the great and novel theory that the traditional stock of legends was first worked up into its present shape by some Buddhist poets who showed a great predilection for the Kuru party. Hindus were not worshippers of prophets, they worshipped incarnations and gods. The Pandavas and Draupadi were not such incarnations or gods or goddesses. The marriage of Draupadi sows the seed of existence which Buddhism fixes in the doctrine of Karma, the sun of merit and demerit. Goutama Buddha considered a lonely life in the forest to be the most conducive to self-conquest. In his view men differed one from another not by accident of birth, but by their attainments of character. The five Pandavas did not differ very much from one another beyond the five principal kinds of meditation taking the place of a prayer in Buddhism with which the boon of Draupadi is connected.

"The first is called Maitri-bhavana, or meditation on Love, in which the monk thinks of all beings, and longs for happiness for each. First, thinking how happy he himself would be if free from all sorrow, anger, and evil desire, he is then to wish for the same happiness for others; and lastly to long for the welfare of his foes, remembering their good actions only, and that in some former birth his enemy may have been his father or his friend, he must endeavour in all earnestness and truth to desire for him all the good he would seek for himself. The second is Karuna-bhavana, or meditation on Pity, in which he thinks of all beings in distress, realises as far as he can their unhappy state, and thus awakens the sentiment of pity. The third meditation is Mudita-bhavana, or meditation on Gladness, the converse of the last. The fourth is Asubha-bhavana, or Purity, in which the monk thinks of the vileness of the body, and of the horrors of disease and corruption, how everything corporeal passes away like the foam of the sea, and how by the continued repetition of birth and death mortals become subject to continual sorrow. We hear of the mirage in the desert cheating the unwary traveller's eyes with the promise of water to quench his burning thirst; but this mirage of human life, raising hopes of joy that turn bitter in the drinking, is a more real mockery. The fifth is Upeksha-Chavana, or the meditation on serenity, wherein the monk thinks of all things that men hold good or bad,—power and oppression, love and hate, riches and want, fame and contempt, youth and beauty, decreptitude and disease, and regards them all with fixed indifference, with utter calmness and serenity of mind."*

*Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume IV, page 436.

This dramatic Mahabharata is the creation of the Buddhistic age. Whatever Yudhisthira won he gave away in the Asvamedha sacrifice. This is what Buddha did. Self-control and charity are the keywords of Buddhism, which establish the worship of five Dhyanibuddhas. Adibuddha, the origin of all things, using the wisdom within him, produced by meditation the five Dhyanibuddhas. The official incarnations of Amitabha and Avalokiteswara are the two leading priests of Tibet. In Tibet the development in doctrine was followed by a development in ecclesiastical Government. Among the customs of the Tibetans the system of polyandry has been in use from a very ancient time, *i.e.*, the brothers in a family having one wife in common. The author of the dramatic Mahabharata must have been a Tibetan Buddhist or a Dravidian. It has been shown that polyandry is even now in vogue in Tibet and Coorg as well.

"The Coorgs, of whom the Kodagas are the chief tribe, constitute thirteen castes. They are of Dravidian origin, and retain the devil-worship of their ancestors; they speak a dialect of Canarese. They are a well-formed, bold and active, but ignorant and superstitious race. The strange institution of polyandry prevalent among them, according to which the wives of the brothers of a family are common property, appears to have arisen from the necessity of counteracting the exterminating influence of wars by making the brothers of the slain the rightful husbands of their widows."*

Drupada was unwilling to circulate the report of Draupadi's marriage with the five Pandavas but was prevailed upon by Vyasa when he was blessed with foresight, which Vyasa gave him in confidence. This speaks for itself. The marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas was a political declaration or a religious one on the five kinds of meditation of the Buddhas. No more hard and fast theory can be given than this as many criticisms have been made and are likely to be made. But it is certain that Draupadi never was the wife of the five Pandavas.

The dramatic Mahabharata first conceived the idea of introducing the circular of Draupadi's marriage with the five Pandavas as a means to an end, the recovery of the possessions of the Pandavas without a blow, and the dice play was the reply to that dramatic Mahabharata by the persecution of Draupadi and Yudhisthira, who should not have agreed to give out such a false report and as a punishment for which he and his brothers with Draupadi were exiled for thirteen years. There were men who studied morality to make a show of their learning and in order not to live according to the accepted rules. When such men became the editors of the great Epic these things were introduced

*Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume VI, page 541.

as something novel and mysterious to be in keeping with the greatness of the illustrious example prodigies. Draupadi did not escape in their hands as wife of the five Pandavas.

"The Gospel contains;" says Mr. Locke, "so perfect a body of ethics that reason may be excused from any further inquiry, since she may find man's duty dearer and easier in revelation than in herself."

The memory and authority of the parents were the religion of the ancient people. Their will was law and their word of authority settled the difficult questions ununderstandable. It was for this reason the alleged political marriage declaration of Draupadi with the five Pandavas was at first acceptable to the world. The dice play at the Kuru Court exposed the hollowness of such a declaration before the kings of India present.

Learned Western Sanskrit scholars, taking these interpolations to be genuine parts of the Mahabharata, have been puzzled by this Epic tradition of Draupadi's having had simultaneously five husbands, which is shockingly opposed to all Vedic customs and Hindu laws of marriage. Taking this dramatic creation of her being the common wife of the five Pandava brothers to be a real fact, they have inferred that the Pandavas must then have flourished in an age when the institutes of Manu, etc., had not yet developed and crystallized.

From the Mahabharata it is evident that the heroes of the Epic as well as the other personages flourished in an age of strict Brahmanical laws and discipline, but from the single seeming fact of Draupadi's anti-Brahmanical marriage, they have proceeded to disprove the accepted age of the heroes of the Mahabharata. The *ratio decidendi* should rather have followed the converse course, namely, that when the heroes and personages of the Epic are seen to be so strongly under the sway of the strict Brahmanical rules and laws, this shockingly anti-Brahmanical episode of Draupadi's marriage with five brothers must itself stand disproved and go out, and the internal evidence of the Mahabharata itself is strong enough to substantiate this. She was the lawfully wedded wife of Yudhisthira alone and the other four Pandavas had their own wives. Draupadi was the empress of Yudhisthira, the emperor, and she was the emblem of the Pandavas' prosperity. The customs and usages found injurious to the people were stopped and punishments were mentioned for transgressors. There is no law of punishment in the Hindu institutes for marrying five husbands if ever that had been the custom amongst the Hindus. No idols or pictures or carvings have been found in India where the five Pandavas were married to one Draupadi.

Arjuna won the beautiful Draupadi at the Svayambara and presented her to his elder brother to marry her according to Hindu custom. A younger brother cannot marry until the elder has done so before him. Arjuna's marriage of love was with Subhadra and others. Yudhisthira married Draupadi and his brothers were the protectors of the queen and the kingdom. Draupadi's modesty and love were great and just, which made them free of falling together by the ears. The Ramayana at the end speaks of the greatest blessing on earth as making brothers live in unity. It also was the aim of the other work, and Draupadi by her good conduct and affectionate love towards the Pandavas achieved it in the Mahabharata. Yudhisthira alone was addressed as husband, and the others as brothers-in-law appear in the addresses of Draupadi in the great Epic.

The four subjects of life, religion, wealth, desire and emancipation, are after all indissolubly connected with love, and the great exponent of that love in dramatic life is a Hindu wife; and such an ideal wife was Draupadi, who did not have that selfish idea of looking to the interest of her husband only but looked to the general welfare of the family and kingdom. That was the philosophy of love a queen, nay an empress of India like Draupadi had to represent and which she did wonderfully in every place whenever she was called upon to do so. She was actually the goddess of prosperity and love whom the Pandavas worshipped and their enemies liked to possess and attempted to do so in vain. Krishna was the emblem of Universal love and reflection of the same was found in Draupadi and hence she was called Krishna. All of them were not of bright white colour (which in science is the mixture of seven colours) but that of the colour of the sky. Love is not the mixture or fusion of colours but is one original prime colour or takes colour like the sky with clouds hovering there. The feelings, like the clouds, gather round the sky of heaven to shower rains to make the earth productive and happy. It might be said with great force about Draupadi :—

> "For beauty and her prudence claiming place
> And all praiseworthy excellence and grace."

Love bathes rejoicing in the crystal light. A woman of beauty worthily deserves all the praise due to her Peace surveys piety, humility and quiet, the product of love and affection. The great Epic Mahabharata describes the great characters in it in the same light. Draupadi dropped dead in the company of her husband and did not leave him like Sita, disappointed and grieved. There lies the greatness of the Mahabharata. Yudhisthira did not look back when his beloved wife fell

and died or when his brothers shared the same fate one after the other. Love is not the fruit of passion. The great Epic demonstrates it in Draupadi. The love of the youths Drupada and Drona ended in envy and dismemberment of Drupad's kingdom. To set it right Drupada performed the sacrifice for the birth of such children as would be able to recover the lost kingdom. This is the genesis of the great Epic in which the Pandavas figured. Draupadi, Dhirstadyumna, etc., were born. Drupada was perhaps told by the sages that he should take the assistance of Sri Krishna, the master of Divine Love, in the marriage of Draupadi. True love represented in Draupadi is a friend of divine love as from true love divine love comes. Divine love stepped in and said in the action :—

> "Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments."

The marriage passed off and after it the goddess of prosperity Lakshmi blessed the Pandavas with suzerainty over India. The goddess of prosperity is reflected in Draupadi; even their worst enemy Durjodhana admitted it and wanted to deprive them of her.

"You should remember Arjuna had his famous bow and Bhima his mace, but it was the praiseworthy Draupadi who liberated the Pandavas, who were all made slaves at the game of dice."*

Draupadi was a fearless, cultured Indian princess who showed that she could stand on her own legs, could render great assistance to Yudhisthira and his brothers. She did not accuse Yudhisthira before his enemies or at home; her stand before the memorable dice hall could not but elicit praise from all. She not only demonstrated what true love is but justified the action of her husband Yudhisthira and stood by him in his worst miseries.

> "Nor for reward, or any fee;
> But like as thou has loved me,
> I love, and ever will love thee,
> Only as king of this my heart,
> Only because my God thou art."
>
> (S. WILBERFORCE.)

The friends of Durjodhana headed by Karna tried her fully by damning the Pandava king, but she proved by her conduct that love when repressed engenders power.

> "The more thou damm'st it up, the more it burns:
> The current that with gentle murmur glides,
> Thou know'st, being stopped, impatiently doth rage;
> But when his fair course is not hinder'd stones,
> Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
> He overtaketh in his pilgrimage."
>
> (SHAKESPEARE.)

* The Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva, Chapter CLX, verses 110-111.

So Shakespeare corroborated her conduct. Violent passions cannot disturb the mind where true love dwells. Love guards against vice Every transgression can be traced to the working of the evil passions in the human heart. It takes possession when the heart is vacant or vacillating. The mind like the body needs to be trained and equipped before it can use its powers in the most advantageous way. A man or woman when in love learns the art of thinking well and consequently the natural powers come into play. This is the root of self-sacrifice in true love; if a lover sacrifices his own pleasure for that of his beloved he is a devotee at the temple of love, never self-possessed. Individuality is no longer his own foolish master, love craves a new and higher object, it inhales the celestial air of doing good to others and makes man or woman forget self-interest. Man becomes the sport of circumstances when he loses command over himself. The art of governing passions is the keynote of success in this vale of tears. Wealth, skill and knowledge can give little satisfaction to man or woman if one does not cultivate control of one's senses. Love and true love can alone control the senses. Discretion gives a value to all human qualifications and it is said to be the better part of valour. Yudhisthira was endowed with it and was truly the husband of Draupadi, the goddess of prosperity and love.

The marriage of Draupadi, according to the Chinese travellers' records, cannot be with the five Pandavas. What Draupadi's marriage with the Pandavas means may be explained in the words of the angel of heaven to Mudgal in Vana Parva, Chapter CCLIX :—

"He spoke thus to the Brahmana. 'Ascend this car. O Rishi, the result of your acts, you have obtained the fruit of your asceticism.' When the celestial messenger was thus talking, the Rishi told him, 'O celestial messenger, I desire that you should describe to me the attributes of those that live there. What is their asceticism and what is their purpose? What is the happiness in heaven and what are its defects? O lord, it has been declared by nobly born virtuous men that friendship with five men is formed by only walking with them seven paces. In the name of friendship, I ask you, tell me the truth and that which is good for me to know. Hearing you, I shall according to your words fix the course I ought to follow."*

After the success of the declaration of the marriage of Draupadi to the five Pandavas had served its end it was exposed that it was not true both in the boon of Dhritarastra to Draupadi and the staking of Draupadi at a game of dice by Yudhisthira. The five Pandavas were united as one by the virtue of Draupadi and they were not separated, as is often the case with brothers who live separate for their wives. Draupadi came out from the fire of sacrifice, as she was reported to have issued, and justified her birth by the divine light of love which she

* The Mahabharata, Vana Parva, Chapter CCLIX, verses 32—36, page 374.

showered round the great king of virtue Yudhisthira to dispel the darkness of the five Pandavas passion. The duty of the eldest brother's wife enjoined on Draupadi to treat them with love and affection, which would make them feel quite happy with higher ideas of life. Kunti had misgivings lest Arjuna be led astray by the wives he had and for that she sent a message through Sri Krishna to Arjuna to act up to the words of Draupadi.

The insult to Draupadi by the conduct of the Kuru princes at the court produced evil omens which brought the blind king Dhritarastra to his senses and he granted her a boon as follows :—

"Dhritarastra said :—O Panchali, ask from me any boon you desire. Chaste and devoted to virtue, you are the foremost of all my daughters-in-law. Draupadi said :—O best of the Bharata race, if you grant me a boon, I say. let the handsome Yudhisthira, ever obedient to all duties, be freed from slavery. Let not unthinking children speak of my greatly intelligent son Prativindya as the son of a slave. Having been born a prince, to whom there is no man superior, and nurtured by kings, it is not proper that he should be called the son of a slave. Dhritarastra said :—O blessed girl, what you have said, let it be so. O excellent one, ask for a second boon. I shall grant it to you. My heart desires to give you a second boon. You do not deserve to get only one boon. Draupadi said :—O king, grant me this boon that Bhimasena, Arjuna and the twins with their bows and cars be freed from slavery and gain their liberty. Dhritarastra said :—O greatly blessed girl, let it be what you say. O daughter, ask for a third boon, you have not been sufficiently honoured with two boons. Ever treading the path of virtue, you are the foremost of all my daughters-in-law. Draupadi said :—O illustrious one, covetousness destroys virtue. O foremost of kings, I do not deserve a third boon; I dare not ask any. O king of kings, it is ordained that a Vaisya may ask one boon, a Kshatriya woman two, a Kshatriya three and a Brahmana one hundred. O king, these my husbands, freed from the wretched state of slavery, will be able to achieve prosperity by their own virtuous acts."*

The boon asked for by Draupadi makes it quite clear that her husband was Yudhisthira alone and her son was Prativindya and no one else. If she were the wife of the five Pandavas she would not have asked for the liberation of Yudhisthira and his son alone in the first boon. Draupadi was chaste not only in body and mind, but soul as well. The chastity of custom was repungant to her ideals. This is what is meant in the alleged report of the five husbands. The five senses of God Indra in different bodies of the Pandavas was the explanation given by the authors of the Dramatic Mahabharata. Love is aroused by the animal passion of the five senses and marriage is the union of human life when these five senses are delighted and rise to the higher sphere of the spiritual world. Draupadi was declared the Empress of India in the Rajsuya of Yudhisthira and at the dice play of the Kuru Court.

* The Mahabharata, Chapter LXXI, Sabha Parva, verses 27—36, pages 95-96.

Draupadi in the dice-play hall, where she had been most outrageously dragged in by the hair by the villainous Dushasana as a slave won at the dice-stake of Yudhisthira, could have easily avoided the result of the stake and saved herself from slavery and the horrible indignities by proclaiming before the royal assemblage the fact, if really it was a fact, that she was not the wife of Yudhistira alone, but of the five Pandavas, and that therefore Yudhisthira alone had no legal right to stake her at the dice-play. This plea was actually suggested to her by Durjodhana and his friends there. They wanted her to make the declaration, knowing full well that it would be a false declaration and as such would not be made by Draupadi. But Yudhisthira and Arjuna, in the midst of Bhima's violent ebulitions of temper and imprecations and vows, exhorted Draupadi and the Pandavas not to swerve an inch from the path of strict obedience to virtue, rectitude and veracity. After this, what Draupadi pronounced possesses the stamp of strict truth, being a confession palpably against her interests in the critical situation in which she had been then placed. By this declaration she virtually gave up all her pleas and surrendered herself to the possible prospect of becoming a slave of the villainous Durjodhana etc. by pronouncing in unequivocal language before the royal assembly that she was the lawfully wedded wife of Yudhisthira alone (as the use of the singular number in राज्ञ्यां राज्ञी clearly indicates, *vide* Doota Parva, (द्यूतपर्व्वे) Chapter 69, verse 11, Original Sanskrit Mahabharata.)

The real truth about the marriage of Draupadi with Yudhisthira alone is proved beyond the shadow of a doubt in the famous dice-play incidents. Draupadi first of all showed great solicitude for Yudhisthira alone as a faithful, cultured princess is morally and in duty bound to do for her lawful husband, and prayed that the wicked Durjodhana and his friends might not indulge in calling her husband Yudhisthira a slave or their son Prativindya to be degraded to a slave's son. If she had been the common wife of all the Pandavas, she would certainly have not particularised and specialised Yudhisthira and his son in the manner she did in her great distress. Besides, it proves that Draupadi did not bear any sons other than this Prativindya.

The best dowry a wise man like Yudhisthira received with his wife Draupadi was the good principle that the brothers could not be divided. For whoever leads home a woman who is not a slave of luxury, possesses a high principled helpmate and not a mistress, a firm aid for his whole life. Draupadi was such a woman. Though born in the lap of luxury she followed the Pandavas to the woods and made them happy. Princess she was, but not drunk with the wine of passions and

luxury. From the attempt to divest her of her clothes at the public dice hall and her challenge it may be said that Draupadi was resigned to wrapping herself in the mantle of her own integrity and sought only honest poverty. It was a question of absolute resignation to God. She learnt this from the discipline of mind and soul in company with her great husband Yudhisthira. Draupadi through her love and devotion to God above saved the husband from abject slavery.

The words of Draupadi in reply to the admonition of Yudhisthira invests Draupadi justly with the title of prosperity incarnate.

"Success or failure, no one should despair, for success in action depends upon the union of many circumstances. One element wanting proportionate success does not come or nothing at all; if however no exertion is made no success is acquired, nor any quality is seen. The man by his intelligence, and according to his might and power, brings place, time, means and auspicious rites for the acquisition of prosperity. One should assiduously engage in action, his guide being his prowess; amongst the qualities necessary for action energy is the foremost. If an intelligent man finds his enemy superior to him in many qualities he should accomplish his object by the arts of conciliation and proper appliances. O Yudhisthira, he should wish for the calamity and banishment of his foe—what of mortal men, even he be an ocean or a mountain. A person, by actively prying into the holes of his enemy, satisfies a debt to himself as well as to his enemies. A man should never think ill of himself; whoever thinks ill of himself never earns splendid prosperity. O descendant of Bharata, the success of persons is thus situated; it is said that the course of success depends upon time and situation. In the days of yore my father housed a learned Brahmana; he said all this to my father, O foremost of Bharatas. My brothers, formerly accepted from Brihaspati moral precepts and then in our house I heard all this from them."*

The love of the sweethearts Sri Radha and Sri Krishna became an open secret in the religion of the Hindus and the dramatist came forward to utilise Draupadi of the great Epic as the connecting link of Sri Krishna's greatness as a God of love, for when Draupadi's honour was at stake the Pandavas, sitting with their weapons, could not help her, but Sri Krishna did by the supernatural power of love. This was a drama of love. There was no separation in the case of Draupadi in the Mahabharata, but no separation is so cruel as that in the presence of the Pandavas, Draupadi was separated in heart and soul to Sri Krishna for the protection of her person. What a pious king like Yudhisthira, with his powerful brothers, could not do, Sri Krishna, the emblem of divine love did. The greatest protection of the human being is the soul force within, which concentrates with that of the Universe. This is the great lesson preached in the taking off of the clothes of Draupadi in the dramatic Mahabharata even though it did not actually take place. The great separation of Draupadi took place in the face of

* The Mahabharata, Chapter XXXII, page 48, Vana Parva, Verses 50—60.

her husband at the Dice Hall. She was insulted in the presence of her husband and his brothers. They could not do anything to relieve her or chastise the oppressor,—this is the divine love of God. Divine love is not the active materialistic love.

Kunti was an ideal mother and Draupadi was an ideal wife—the two great women made the Pandavas great. Domestic happiness depends on the moral discipline of the family members, social happiness on the religious background of the country and spiritual felicity on the training of the mind and soul and their union. The essence of virtue and vice is not the contamination of the bodies of persons or society by the infliction of anything wrong in the eyes of society. Such ideas differ with the habits and customs of a country, and the standard is bound to be affected by them. The ancient Hindus did not build their religion on that basis. Their ideals were of a higher standard than the ordinary ones. Doctors attend injuries to the body, kings inflict punishments on wrong-doers, priests minister to the mind diseased, and friends and relations revive and restore the position of their dependants and penitance and penances remove the sins of the mind. It is divine love which alone can give the eternal bliss of heaven.

Chastity in body is not chastity in mind or soul. Renuka, the mother of Parasurama, was not guilty of unchastity of body but of mind and she met her doom at the hand of her own son by the command of her husband. Sita was exiled though she was chaste in body and mind, for she was not so in soul as she wept over her lot and could not enjoy peace of mind. She passed to earth as her daughter. She belonged to the maternal world. From earth she came, to earth she went; but Draupadi came out of fire and consumed the passions of not only the Pandavas but exposed those of the world princes who assembled at her Svayambara ceremony of marriage by their inglorious fight and defeat. The villiany of the Kuru Court and of the world who followed them in their mad pursuit to deprive the Pandavas of their just possessions was set at rest by the marriage of Draupadi. She proved to the world that it was the chivalry of the Pandavas which secured them the sovereignty of the world.

She did not swoon and die at the calumny of her husband or join with his enemies for the indignities she had been subjected to by her husband's indiscretion, but she justified her husband's action even in her worst trial—there is the greatness of Draupadi in the current Mahabharata over the Ramayana, which is hardly realised by all. The political report of five husbands could not touch her reputation or her soul like Sita's residence at the Court of Ravana so many years alone in spite of the

fire ordeal. The chastity of Sita lies in mind and person but not in spirit, for the boons she asked in the Ramayana read as follows:—

"Then raising suppliant hands the dame
Prayed humbly to the Lord of Flame;
'As this fond heart by virtue swayed
From Raghu's son has never strayed,
So, universal witness, Fire
Protect my body on the pyre,
As Raghu's son has idly laid
This charge on Sita, hear and aid'" *

This is not the only instance. There is another to relieve Hanuman the great messenger of Rama who was persecuted by Ravana with the burning of his tail:—

"Swift to the kindled fire she went
And prayed before it reverent;
'If I my husband have obeyed,
And kept the ascetic vows I made,
Free, ever free, from stain and blot,
O spare the Vanar; harm him not'
Then leapt on high the flickering flame
And shone in answer to the dame.
The pitying fire its rage forbore;
The Vanar felt the heat no more." †.

She refused to be carried to Rama by Hanuman on the ground of discipline of morality:—

"Nor can I touch, of free accord,
The limbs of any save my lord.
If, by the giant forced away,
In his enfolding arms I lay,
Not mine, O Vanar, was the blame;
What could I do, a helpless dame?
Go, to my lord my message bear,
And bid him end my long despair." ‡

The Pandavas and Draupadi dropped down dead in their journey of life like ripe fruits off a tree with the progress of time. Draupadi went first of all. Yudhisthira did not care to look at her or to perform the last rite like a domestic being. He was on a pilgrimage to the divine shrine of heaven. The pilgrims of the same path do not reach the goal. The great Maya Draupadi must go when the pilgrims are earnest like the Pandavas, the heroes of great trials and fruits of self-control. The

* Professor Ralph T. H. Griffith's "The Ramayan of Valmiki" Canto CXVIII, Book VI, page 496.

† Ibid. Canto LIII, Book V, page 423.

‡ Ibid. Canto XXXVII, Book V, page 416.

greatness of Sita and Draupadi is reflected in their horrible sufferings for they could have burnt to ashes their enemies by the power of chastity if they wished to do so. A well balanced mind by culture is the best remedy against all worldly afflictions—this is the gospel of truth the Indian Epics preach and not the exploits of the heroes of the Royal houses of Oudh, (Ajodhya) or Delhi (Indraprastha).

But there are good grounds for holding that the whole character of Draupadi is an interpolation and a fiction. The principal personages of the Epic (like the forecast of the *dramatis personæ*) are enumerated in the Annukramanika and it is highly improbable that the character of the very heroine would be omitted, if really she was one of the characters of the original Epic. The true incidents of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were thus traduced by dramatists of the Buddhistic teaching of Tibet who introduced their own customs and manners in the heroes and heroines of the Epic and made them their own property. The heroine of the dramatic Mahabharata is Draupadi, but no mention is made in the table of contents of the Mahabharata about it, where only the names of Kunti and Gandhari are mentioned. This gives a clue to the sad transformation of the original Mahabharata into the dramatic form in which the current Mahabharata is now presented to the world. Like the characters of Bhisma, Karna etc, Draupadi too is a creation of the later editors and collators for lending dramatic interest to the great Epic.

It will now be clear why Draupadi's character has been a puzzle, why Yudhistira's perplexingly stoic calmness amidst oppression and tyranny has been an enigma, and why Sri Krishna's absolute disinterestedness in lending his whole army to the Kurus and himself alone going over to the Pandavas has been a riddle to the world. The votaries of the Epic Muse have racked their brains to solve the true implications of these mystic characters but have seldom succeeded in satisfactorily solving the riddles.

These are the characters in the Indian Epics which have been the outstanding figures, from their unique singularity and the absence of the commonplace in them. The other characters, like those of Rama and Sita, Bhima and Arjuna, Bhisma and Karna, etc., superb and magnificient as they are, are not clothed with any singular or unique traits but are only magnified as magnificent exponents of ordinary human traits and features. These characters are therefore quite clear and intelligible to everybody and so do not call for special exposition.

The Epic authors represent characters to teach the world virtue and truth effectively by examples. They cite evil deeds against good

ones to bring them out with greater force. Prudence is the best safeguard against misfortune and it is learnt more from bitterest enemies than from bosom friends. Nations learn to protect the people by defensive measures such as raising high walls round their capitals, keeping ready capable armies, navies, arms and ammunition to defend themselves against aggression. God has been manifesting himself through art and the great artists of mankind. The teachings of Vyasa and Valmiki are different from the Western Epic writers. It is true that art is the best medium of man's transformation to godliness. It is to be found in music, poetry, sculpture, painting, etc. But Indian Epic writers presented ideal heroes and heroines who have knowledge of self and soul. They have been the torch-bearers of a Nation. It is their will and power to shower Divine knowledge upon the people of India and bring about their salvation.

Men are not meant to flit away as dreams or fade like leaves or like a beast tofeast his belly with the hand and mouth, but the great Creator has given something to man superior to all these—the heart to love Him whom eye hath not seen nor ear hath heard Him speak. If beauty is all in all you must see that God has made beauty vanish with age and time and not everlasting in nature, man, woman and the animal kingdom. Orpheus made known to people noble mysteries to abstain from bloodshed and Homer taught what was useful of military skill and all the various life of armies Poets are school masters in the arena of life to teach men virtue and truth. Browning in his art poem characterises Art as the go between of man and God. "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp."

The Epics of India are slowly engrossing the attention and sympathy of the cultured men and women of the world and they are anxious to know more and more of India through Indian eyes. There is the irresistible urge of the true Indian culture to embrace the whole world as its kith and kin (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakum) as is expressed in Sanskrita language.

The Bhakti cult of Vaihnavism is reflected in primitive Christianity. It is admitted by Professor Garbe and others. Besides, the Hetiodorous inscription of Basnagar (150 B. C.) proves beyond doubt that the Greeks were followers of the Bhakti cult. The worship of the Avalokiteswara of supreme compassion betrays Graeco-Buddhist Art. The Mahabharata throws light on a fight of an international nature in the plains of Kurukshettra, giving victory to the party who followed the great principles of tolerance and well-being of the greater number of innocent and pious men and women. Sri Krishna heralded the keynote of the power

of the cultural federation of greater India to the world and declared himself the king of Dwarka, the land of love, with sixteen thousand bright, loving queens of India.

Yajnavalkya started a revolt against religious materialism and arid ritualism and asserted the noble principle of moral responsibility patent in the doctrines of Atman or soul-self in the Upanishads. He and his disciple king Janaka paved the path of Jainism and Buddhism in India. The history of Indo-Aryan and Indo-Brahmin collaboration has yet to be written. The great king Darius occupied a portion of the Indus valley which was perhaps the seat of the discovered Mohenjodaro civilisation. It is -urmised that the word was thus imparted into the Sanskrit vocabulary. The Mahabharata contains the best tradition of the greater India with glowing tributes to the great ideal heroes and heroines of the physical, social, moral and spiritual worlds. The Ramayana is only a heroic poem throwing light on the different phases of kings and queens of Treta Yuga in Dasaratha and his consorts Koushlya and Kakeyi, Rama and Sita, Ravana and Mandadari, Bali and Tara.

The Mabahharata stands on a higher plane ; there the heroes did not ascend the throne by right of inheritance but by virtue of their culture and practices. Sri Krishna won the laurel in killing tyrants like Kamsa and Sisupala, and was instrumental in the death of Jarasandha, whereas Yudhisthira, Arjuna and Bhima won the Empire, levelling to the ground the invincible heroes and powerful kings in the famous battlefield of Kurukshettra. The Epic writters place side by side the great and virtuous and the powerful tyrants. In the elevated society of rank it is only vanity and interest that stand out. A desire to amend the ways of the world is unalloyed folly. Friends of humanity are not easily found. The noble do not care to be mixed up with the whole world. There are men with fiery zeal whom one sees rushing to high fortune by the road leading to heaven, for they are the men who make a trade and traffic of politics and piety and are ready to purchase influence and dignity by the turning up of the whites of their eyes and affected ejaculations with a soul given up to filthy lucre.

What does it mean when a man like Bhisma, Drona or Karna meets Durjodhana and rushes to caress him swearing friendship, faith, zeal in his affairs, esteem and tenderness ? Fishes do not shut their eyes, which are lidless. Science has not been able to answer definitely whether they sleep or close their eyes. The Epic writers likewise made these men immune from death as if invulnerable, and then made them stake their lives at their pleasure in a game of truthfulness, curse on sacrifice

for all that is held sacred and holy in the eyes of the people to attract their admiration in order to inspire them with such examples. The punishments of the mighty heroes are more full of fear than evil and not without reason, like the lightning which causes danger to few but fear to all. He who sticks to silver and honour is never satisfied with them. Death is at last to be wished for by them.

Every man is to measure himself by his proper standard. One has been brought into the world with everything prepared and ready to hand. It is difficult to renounce one's own nature. The man who is too engrossed in fortune's favour will tremble when she leaves him. It was for this that Durjodhana hid himself in the lake Daipayana. This man, fearing poverty, had to depend on others, *viz.*, Bhisma, Drona, Karna, Asvathama, etc., whom he carried on his shoulders as masters and lived in eternal bondage being intemperate in his ambition. Riches in the hands of the wise yield obedience, but in those of the fool, command. Durjodhana and his father were blind to all that the Pandavas did for them when they were in danger. Besides, the Kurus were like savage bears to the Pandavas but were at peace among themselves. To distinguish human creation God has given man a reasoning soul, so that mutual kindness might be lit in human hearts to return the good which others render.

The Indian Epic demonstrates to the world that the good hate sin from an innate love of virtue. Virtue is not a mere name nor religion, a rhapsody of words, but is the great qualifications of mind and heart produced by culture. It makes man fly from the world's grandeur, ambition and riches. The poor forlorn man has a greater chance of happiness in the woods than kings, their generals and courtiers in a majestic court. Virtue and religion bring to light what is concealed from ordinary eyes and cover up what is shining with the greatest splendour and exciting the human senses. One cannot but sympathise with the misfortunes of Rama and Sita, Yudhisthira and Draupadi, and feel relieved at their eventual victories with glory. The feeling heart when it embalms with tears cannot help but approach the presence of God. The Indian Epics declare that Yudhisthira showed this by his inimitable life and proved it to be eternal, whereas his great adversaries Bhisma and Drona, though immortal, paid the penalty of death. His own brothers Arjuna and Bhima, even his consort Draupadi, could not escape the hand of death. Acceptable men like Yudhisthira and Arjuna are thrust in the furnace of adversity and trials like gold is tried for its pureness in the fire. Great men rejoice in adversity just as a great general triumphs in victory through hard trials and by overcoming dangers.

In every great war of the world there are two accounts—one admiring the fallen victims, the other marching triumphantly with the victorious heroes and singing their praise. The current Mahabharata is a medley of these two versions; any compromise between them was utterly impossible. The description of the war of Kurukshettra is of a much later age and has become unwieldy, containing as it does the accounts of all the fallen victims of the different provinces of India who fought and fell in the great battle on either side. The moral of the great Epic seems to have been that through perseverance, energy, skill, devotion and merit Sri Rama and Sri Krishna could overcome giants like Ravana and his powerful families, Emperors like Jarasandha, Dhritarastra and their friends and allies.

The love and tribute of his subjects are the greatest protection of a king worthy of becoming an Emperor of India. This is demonstrated in the subjects of the Epics in sacrifices of Asvamedha and Rajsuya of Ancient India. It is for this the great Indian Epics were recited with religious fervour in those glorious sacrifices of ancient India. The scenes of the two famous fights of India, which were the subject matters of the two great Indian Epics, were not the same place but quite distant from each other. The Ramayana links Ceylon with India, but the Mahabharata decentralises India in the famous plain which afterwards became the venue decisive battles about the sovereignty of India.

The Epic authors present their heroes and heroines in different spheres of life. They did not mix in society in the sense in which that word is used and understood in the west; but their ideals radiated amongst the Indian Nation from the very early days to go ahead of the other nations of the world. The kings and queens of Ancient India were ideal men and women who suffered for their convictions, for culture and intellect must always be for the great sacrifices in the best interests of the humanity over whom they rule not by the power of their own strength and arms but by their unique examples of sacrifices. The ancient Indian kings and queens sacrificed their own pleasures of the senses in order that they might guide their subjects just as dutiful cultured parents do in bringing up their children to instil in them all their advanced notions of life and living.

The ideal princes and princesses went to the forest, abdicating their thrones and pleasures of life, for the sake of their parents in order that the great ideal might not suffer in the eyes of their subjects.

REVIEW.

The Indian Epics from a superficial viewpoint present similar themes, developed with similar romantic adventures and leading to similar sequels. Both start with pictures of court-scenes with old kings and princes, with plurality of queens; both pass on to tragic banishments and exiles of princes to the woods for long terms; both present developments of romantic adventures which lead to bitter strife and sanguinary battles ending in almost the annihilation of the party which was in the wrong and the coronation of the triumphant party with its necessary appendage of a great sacrifice. The Mahabharata however, does not centre round a single hero and a single heroine like the Ramayana, and therein lies the superior grandeur of the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata develops several characters as heroes and heroines, each being a hero or a heroine from a particular point of view. The five Pandavas collectively represented the different princely attributes of humanity, justice, love, prowess, etc., Kunti, Gandhari and Draupadi represented the distinguishing features of womanly virtues of princesses; Sri Krishna, Bhisma and Bidura were ideals of divine love, chivalry and ripe wisdom, respectively.

The great Epic opens with the hard life of discipline of Ancient India and the cultivation of Pouranic literature and the science of medicine in the first three sections—Pousya, Poulama and Astika. They give an idea of Ancient India and its progress in the university of Naimischaranya under Sounaka. The Veda had not been forgotten when the original Bharata Samhita or the Mahabharata was composed. Vyasa had compiled the Rig Veda and Devapi made a Sukta of it. Sri Krishna was a pupil of Ghora Angirasa, who taught him special Upanishadic tenets. The Parikshits were referred to as real personages by Yajnavalkya. They could not therefore be imaginary personages.

The privations, hardships and trials in the old Aryan education are graphically described in the Pousya Parva. In the Poulama Parva the strength of love between husband and wife is patent. The sacrifice of the half of the one's span of life to add to the life of the other visualises the extent of sacrifice which a loving husband can make for his wife, and the abduction of Bhrigu's wife by Poulama shows the attachment of the wife for the husband. The offering of a bribe to Kasyap by the king of Naga to dissuade him from bringing Parikshita back to life shows the

sage's great knowledge of medicines and sure antidotes for snake poison. The enumeration of the five principal sins includes adultery with the preceptor's wife. Uttamka was tried and was found worthy of his preceptor's daughter, to whom he was married. His gotra was Goutama. Unsuspecting Ahalya, wife of Goutama, fell a victim to Indra's misconduct and Rama, by accepting her hospitality, established her innocence but failed to do so in the case of his own Sita and exiled her. The poem, in developing Rama's attribute of love for his subjects has pushed it to such an extreme degree of theoretical excellence, that in practical life it has come to be regarded as a standing reproach to Rama's conjugal fidelity.

The Solar and Lunar dynasties descended from the two families of sages, Kasyap and Atri, respectively. Buddha was son of Soma (Moon) and from him the Lunar dynasty is traced. The Sun was Kasyapa's son. Baibasyata, Manu, Yama, and a step-sister Tapati, were the offspring of the Sun. The king Sambarana was married to Tapati and the Lunar dynasty descended from him. The list of kings of the Solar and Lunar dynasties do not justify the claim that they belonged to different cycles of time as Treta and Dvapara, as is generally held and believed.

Very interesting particulars about the Indian Epics are found in Devi Bhagavata, which is more important and trustworthy than the mere imagination of the present-day writers, as there were greater chances of arriving at the truth then than now. Sri Krishna established the worship of the goddess Sarasvati (9th Skanda, Skanda Purana, 4th Chapter). Vyasa and Valmiki were contemporaries and the former sought the latter's advice before he undertook the great task (Ibid, 5th Chapter). The true meaning of the word Narottama, mentioned in the invocation verse, is one who is well-versed in Veda and Vedangas, into whose ears the Vishnu incantations were poured and whose birth absolves the forefathers from sin. (Ibid, 7th Chapter). Vyasa and Narada discoursed in the said Purana (3rd Skanda, 2nd Chapter).

The Astika Parva gives an insight into the original and subsequent versions of the Mahabharata. Those were conflicting versions, that the original portion was according to the White Yajus and it was converted into Black Yajus, as is referred to in the twentieth chapter of the Astika Parva in the colour of the tail of the horse Ucchaisrava. The reference to Krishna Veda in the table of contents makes it quite clear. The Nagas were the followers of the Black Yajus and the Parikshits were followers of the White Yajus, and in the great fight that took place in the sacrifice over the two kinds

of Yajus the Black came out victorious in the sense that the White Yajus failed to annihilate the Black. Yajnavalkya's edition of the Epic was introduced as the triumph of the Black Yajus. There was a Yajnavalkya Gotra among Vasisthas also. *

"The Bharata poem belongs to the West, the region about Delhi; the Ramayana, to the East, to Oudh, the region north of Benares. Nevertheless, the style of the two Epics is so far related as to be formed to a great extent on identical phraseology. Both Epics have the same proverbs and know the same stories. All of this shows that the ancient tale of the North-West has been transplanted into the new seat of culture about Benares, and that the Mahabharata was completed where the Ramayana began."......"I may add that all the literary indications point to this explanation, such, for example, as that the tales wovens into the later Epic are almost always set about the lower Ganges."......"To turn from the finished product to the origin of these two poems, which arose far apart but ended in the same literary environment, of the source of the Ramayana there is little to say, for it is attributed as definitely and regularly to Valmiki as is the Æneid to Vergil, whom the Hindu author preceded by several centuries. Now tradition ascribes the great Epic also—that is, the Mahabharata (which means the great Bharata story and so may be called simply the Bharata)—to a certain Vyasa; but this Vyasa is a very shadowy person, to whom is ascribed also the arrangement of the Vedas and other works, his name meaning merely arranger or disposer. In fact, his name probably covers a guild of revisers and re tellers of the tale. Moreover, there is internal evidence that the poem has been re-written. There is, in a word, no one author of the great Epic. It was handed down piecemeal, at first in ancient lays. These became recitations and, united with heterogeneous material of all sorts, were at last bound together as one loosely connected whole."......"The manner of presenting the primitive lays out of which arose the first Epic stories was as follows: At a certain point in the performance of a sacrifice the ritual demanded that two or three singers should step forward with lutes or lyres in their hands, and, to quote verbatim from the antique directions given for the ceremony: 'They shall then sing the king or some other brave hero' and the subject shall be 'this king fought in such a battle,' 'this hero won such a victory.' Here we have recorded in a formal rule of the ancient ritual the very same conditions, barring the sacrifice, as those which gave rise to the Greek Epic, the rhapsode singing them; and so, later on, we find that in India, also, the song changes to recitation. But in India, Epic recitation never became a mere reading, except to the learned."†

Durjodhana did not play dice like Birata with Yudhisthira but employed Sakuni to play and deceived him. Birata had angrily struck his body with the instrument of play and shed his blood, but did not wound his heart by his conduct as did Sakuni, though he did not wound Yudhisthira's body. Draupadi did not feel dishonoured so much by the plain proposal of Kichak, the brother-in-law of king Birata, as she was by the insult of Durjodhana and his brother and friend, Karna, etc. Abhimanyu sacrificed his life for the cause of his father and family like a true hero, but Asvathama inspite of being a great warrior, avenged the

* Mat. 200, 6 Prof. Pargiter's Note, page 237.

† Dr. Hopkins' 'India Old and New', pages 63-69.

death of his revered father not in the battlefield but at dead of night under cover of darkness and sleep by smothering them like a thief and secret assassin. Drona wanted help from king Drupada in fulfilment of a promise of school days. No better proof of idleness and covetousness could be illustrated.

Bhima was not a passive instrument of his great brother Yudhisthira, like Dushasana. He showed his temper at the dice-play. Regarding Karna and Sakuni the less said the better, as there is hardly anything vile with which they were not connected. The piety of Karna as a man of his word and honour in refusing Sri Krishna's offer of an empire by his connection with Kunti by birth on the ground of its being a breach of faith with Durjodhana, fell to the ground when he acceded to the request of Kunti to spare the Pandava brothers (excepting Arjuna) behind Durjodhana's back. Kunti's prayer he could not grant, but made a promise unknown to Durjodhana, which he should not have done if he were honest. Arjuna lost his only son but did not leave the field and the war did not come to an end as the Kurus had thought it would and for which they led the loot and cruelly murdered the poor warrior boy in a helpless manner wholly against the canons of chivalry and battle. Yudhisthira, the king of justice and fair-play, in consideration of Arjuna's services and greatness passed the throne to his line. The greatness of the Pandavas was displayed in their brotherly love in all their trials, which the Ramayana could not portray though the merit of its reading is said to increase brotherly love.

The character of Bibhisan in the Ramayana has passed into a proverb in common parlance. Bharata's reverence of Rama by worshipping his sandals during his exile and Laksman's faithful adherence to his brother are no less prominent. The dramatic Mahabharata goes further and tries to put Bibhisan and Karna somewhat in the same category by making Sri Krishna try to win the latter by the offer of a kingdom, as Rama Chandra did in the Ramayana, Book VI., Canto XIX. In the Ramayana the disgraced Bibhisan went to Rama, but in the case of Karna he was a child of disgrace, honoured by the enemies of the Pandavas. Bibhisan betrayed Ravana openly. Karna betrayed Durjodhana secretly in his promise to Kunti. There is some sort of affinity between Bidur and Bibhisan also. Bidur was exiled by Dhritarastra but he did not go to the side of the Pandavas, like Bibhisan. Karna was not a brother of the Pandavas but a courtier of Durjodhana. If he had had the blood of the Sun he would not have stooped down to the low position of a courtier. Bibhisan went to Rama for the throne and safety, but did not betray his brother privately, as Karna did Durjodhana by the promise that

he would not kill the four Pandavas other than Arjuna. Bibhisan and Bidur were brothers of Ravana and Dhritarastra and their maxim may be said in the words of Bibhisan.

"'Thy rights O Ravan, I allow:
My brother and mine elder thou.
Such, though from duty's path they stray,
We love like fathers and obey,
But still too bitter to be borne
Is thy harsh speech of cruel scorn.
The rash like thee, who spurn control
Nor check one longing of the soul,
Urged by malignant fate repel
The faithful friend who counsels well.
A thousand courtiers wilt thou meet,
With flattering lips of smooth deceit;
But rare are they whose tongue or ear
Will speak the bitter truth, or hear.
Unclose thy blinded eyes and see
That snares of death encompass thee."*

To guard a woman from the hands of mischief is not in the power of kings or gods. The kings, like Rama and Yudhistira, could not protect their queens from being insulted and disgraced. There is a sort of resemblance between marriage and old age. Young men want to marry and like to be grey, but when they are in actual experience of these they are grieved. It is not the stone wall and powerful armies which protect an empire but the wise and the good are the real bulwarks of a nation. History is nothing but a philosophy. It teaches by example. Those that run after pleasure and sport come to grief for they bring loss of energy and power. It is for this the inspiration of Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana, runs :—

"No fame be thine for endless time,
Because, base outcast, of thy crime,
Whose cruel hand was fair to slay
One of this gentle pair at play.

The gentle pair here is the great Rama and Sita, who were enjoying forest life in exile.

Curiosity is the instinct of. youth. It allures people with strong attractions and makes them long for something new, as was the case with Rama in his pursuit of the golden deer. In youth levity is the jocund guiding star, veiling the future. This the poet depicts in the abduction of Sita by Ravana in the Ramayana.

* Professor Ralph T. H. Griffith's "The Ramayan of Valmiki, page 438, Canto XVI, Book VI.

Man or woman did not spring up like a fungus and rot quickly on the spot, leaving no trace of his or her existence. Man creates his wants, which are the roots of all trouble. Poets present heroes and heroines placed in the throes of evil times and tragic circumstances, which show them in the true metal they are made of. Mere forms of beauty in man and woman cannot arouse delight at all times. 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever', is the creation of great poets who are immortalised as much as their heroes and heroines. He who is true and firm in will, will mould circumstances to himself. This is the truth the Indian Epics preach in their great ideals.

The cruel Ravana separated Rama and Sita in spite of his great enjoyment of long life through the boon of God. In Ravana the great poet presented to the world the picture of what pleasure could be derived from riches, powerful children like Meghanada, wives like Mandadori and royal power even subjecting gods, and how on account of his wickedness his golden kingdom vanished like a shadow through the energy of a man and his messenger Hanuman. The well-known proverb goes:—" He that gathereth by labour shall increase." It is better not to be born at all than to lead a disgraceful life. This is the idea which ruled the sentiment of Ancient India and the pious queen Sita. She did not hate death with justice. She considered it to be a mighty remedy .and so was the follower of the divine Parbati, the consort of the God Siva. It is not good to jeer at the dead. Gods care not for gifts, nor do they accept sacrifices or libations on any altar, nor do they care for a hymn of praise. Persuasion is the quality with which the gods are pleased. The dignity of chastity of Parbati and Sita is reflected in their deaths. Death alone is the physician of all wordly woes, to translate the great to the Heaven of Gods and the wicked to the Hell of Satan.

During the whole of one's life the child is either a cause of fear, labour or grief. This is the theme of the Indian Epics. Karna belonged to the family of the Sutas, the community of the reciters of king's praise and glory and they made Karna their great champion of valour and greatness, ascribing his birth to the great Sun-god and to Kunti, the great example of a Kshatriya mother. The self-sacrifice of Kunti was very great. She did not participate in the enjoyment of her son's victory but retired to the forest to practice religious asceticism, to bear the bereaved Dhritarastra and Gandhari company and to tend them in their distress. She was a princess of the old school. She suffered great miseries after the death of her husband in bringing up her children so that they might be glorious. She did not like her children to be like Durjodhana and Dushasana, wholly given up to enjoyment and

vanity. Parents are more responsible for the upbringing of their children than the children themselves. Alexander admitted it openly that he owed everything to his mother. Sri Krishna, the ideal God, proved it in the destruction of the Kurus and their allies and so it was with the family of Yadus.

No mortal sees God, but it is believed that He sees every human action. There are two divisions of law, one written and the other unwritten. What is the law of the land is made by law-givers and kings, but the one arising from nature and habit is called the unwritten law. In the unwritten law conscience is the witness to what is done by man or woman. It is the sacred spirit within one, the observer and guardian of what is good or bad to him or her. The cause of a man's credibility is not in others but in his own character, which make his words held sacred and not a question of belief. God loves to assist those in trouble, but the wicked in prosperity are not to be borne. What greater pair is there on earth than when power and justice unite

Force attended by wisdom is a very great advantage, but when it is not so attended, it results in calamity and ruin. The pleasant days of a woman are her marriage day as well as the day of funeral. The vigour of a man is but for a day. Labour upon labour comes for a few short, limited periods of years and death is unavoidable. The good and the bad have got an equal share of it. No one is fortunate throughout his life. One cannot conduct his household affairs and carry on the object or creation without a woman. The great sages like Visvamitra and Bharadvaja could not escape from the scourge of passion. How to live when there is plenty of time to die is the question of all questions.

The civilisation of India is the civilisation of a country where the literature of the Vedas, Upanishads, etc., sprang up and expanded. The great question of all times has been whether circumstances command man or man commands circumstances, which, in other words, is the vexed question of the doctrine of necessity or free-will. A man suffers for his own actions but blames the Almighty Father out of idleness, saying that he is a creature of circumstance.

The Epic characters must be judged in the light of the circumstances and the times in which they flourished. In a court of justice it is not always that the right and just side wins, for there are various factors which go to make for success, *viz.*, the merit of the judge, the capacity and calibre of the advocate and the intelligence and diligence of the client. The Mahabharata is a book of the Greater India and not of a particular part of it like the Ramayana, which is supposed to

symbolise the spread of civilisation to Southern India and Ceylon. The whole of India was represented in the great fight of Kurukshettra. A real history of Ancient India was not in existence and everything had to be gleaned from the records of ancient customs, manners, habits, food, drink, mode of living, society, civilisation, law and religion.

The Epics did not speculate on human fate by drama-writing but were manuals of religious lessons and preached the form of religion most acceptable to God. Customs generally depend on national institutions and the profligacy and vices of individuals are exposed so that they may not infect the whole nation. The law strives to punish the guilty in order that they may not influence the mass by their example. The man who has real fortitude and magnanimity is not blown about by every random gust but shows his virtues under the most trying and adverse circumstances. There can be no real desire to imitate virtue unless the person who sets the example of virtue be loveable and estimable. To do this has been one of the most important aims of the Epics.

The examples and anecdotes do not belong to any particular class or tract of the country but to the whole of India as a unit. A man or a woman is subject to passions in youth. There is a war of passion in every being, and he who is vanquished by passion becomes a slave and is liable to death, but he who overcomes it becomes a hero and immortal. This is the lesson the Indian Epics preach in their ideal heroes and heroines. God is revealed in them, and the Epics become revelations. The Epics describe tyrants in their golden cities wallowing in sensuality with ten heads or a thousand hands but who are not contented and ultimately die at the hands of poor exiles in the woods who stuck to truth and wisdom and were not drawn aside by misfortune or adversity. Bali, the greatest and most powerful king of the Asuras, was sent to the nether world by the beggar Dwarf (Baman). It showed that both extreme vanity or depravity in a king disqualify him for heaven. The Epics unfold the past and give a history of the past through their heroes and heroines. A deep and careful study of old literature is necessary for a proper insight into this.

The lives and deeds of past heroes are depicted in the Epics in a more life-like way than in sculpture or painting. They shed lustre on the dark ages in which they flourished, advancing the spread of civilisation through the regions and tracts they traversed in their heroic adventures. Heroes, who raised themselves above their neighbours excited their jealousy by their excessive splendour, and came to be loved only after their death; such was the case with the Pandavas, and Vyasa wrote the Epic after they had gone to their rest.

The Indian Epics have two sides, *viz*:—the material and the spiritual. Material prosperity depended upon spiritual greatness and did not depend so much upon the merit of the previous birth as the Yoga system of philosophy adumbrates and the Gita propounds. The Pandavas did not attain their greatness through any merit earned in previous lives. Material prosperity or earthly happiness, on the other hand, often led to sorrow and punishment, as is shown in the case of the heavenly king Mahavisa being transformed into King Santanu, of the divine Basu being transformed into Bhisma and Indra into Pandavas, so also Yajati fell from heaven and king Nahusa too fell from heaven and was transformed into a snake. The powerful brothers of Yudhisthira died, being unable to answer the questions of Yaksha in the form of a crane. All these bear out that the Indian Epics preach the tale of spiritual greatness more than material prosperity and inculcate that real and lasting happiness and bliss can be had only from spiritual excellence.

The story of Aswatthwama killing Abhimanyu's child in the embryo and Krishna neutralising the power of the ascetic Brahmin bears it out. Krishna did not bring the child back to life as a God, but he did it by invoking the powers of religious merit he attained as a man who had practised virtue and had never told a lie in his life. And, in passing, it should be noticed that this makes it inconceivable how such a man of truth and virtue could instigate another great apostle of virtue and truth to tell a lie to kill Drona by a false report of his son Aswatthwama's death. The symbolical meaning is nothing but this, that Sri Krishna made Aswatthwama die when the latter's boasted powers were rendered powerless by Sri Krishna, for the Mahabharata describes various kinds of death and one of them is bragging. These stories were introduced by the rhapsodists and the later revisers to create amusement while they lost sight of the real significance of the original themes. And such amusing stories in the popular editions of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are not wanting. The introduction of the story of Yavanas issuing from the disinherited heirs of Yajati is another instance of such an addition, which was done during the Moghul rule in India to induce inter-marriage between the Moghul princes and Rajput princesses, who were great believers in the Epics.

The superiority of the great Indian Epic Mahabharata over the other Epics of the world lies in the sublime grandeur of the portraiture of the greatness of spiritual excellence of Yudhisthira. One instance of it, amidst a hundred others, is the picture of Durjodhana's going into the forest where the Pandava brothers were living as exiles, to inflict pain on them by the display of his royal grandeur, and

Yudhisthira's act of generosity towards him in saving his life and honour. Durjodhana had robbed Yudhisthira of his kingdom, wealth, hearth and house and had exiled him with his brothers to the woods and reduced them to the extremest poverty and privations. To add insult to injury, he, decking himself and his queen in full regal pomp and splendour, went on a visit to the same forest where Yudhisthira and the others were living in exile with a view to inflict pain on them, and Draupadi, by a show of his and his queen's majestic splendour and power. But on the way they were defeated in a fight with the Gandharvas and taken prisoners. Yudhisthira, on hearing of Durjodhana's and his queen's sad plight and danger, sent his brothers and told the Gandharvas that so long as they were alive they could not bear and suffer his cousin and his wife to be so humiliated and ill-treated, and liberated Durjodhana, etc., from impending captivity and death.

A more sublime and superb picture of generosity and spiritual greatness is impossible and is nowhere to be seen. All the pomp and power of Yudhisthira's kingdom Durjodhana had stolen as it were by a stroke of deceitful dice-play and Yudhisthira could have recovered all in one stroke, on having vanquished the vanquisher of Durjodhana, but the virtuous and generous Yudhisthira did not do so. He acted here more like a God of divine and universal love than a human being.

Fame is the noblest of all human possessions which survives after death and is the most valuable of all legacies to history. Art and poetry draw their food from the field of death, while in actual life success and victory crown the head of the hero. The genius of Vyasa and Valmiki made their heroes and heroines ever fresh and alive in the reader's mind. Their heroes and heroines, evergreen and living, speak the joys and miseries of life with their hearts silent in blissful joy of eternity. They are always remembered in their deeds and the world pays tribute by following them with a sincere heart. Honour to them, who were united as one in man and woman in the fascinating bond of human creation. All honour to that noble lady who wielded the sceptre of a queen which united the five attributes of kingly virtues. All glory to the five Pandava brothers! who could have played fierce fiends as Durjodhana tried to make them in the Dice Hall but failed.

It is not the flesh and blood but the heart that makes one feel the love of a father, a mother, a brother, a husband, a wife, a son, a daughter. The man who fears no one is no less powerful than the one who is feared by every one. Power of virtue reigns supreme. How pleasant it is to be lulled into that sleep of death from whose bourne the heroes and heroines return to receive tribute from the world, as it

were. This is the true meaning of Yudhisthira's passing to Heaven in person. How happy was that marriage where all the Pandavas were united and married together by the spirit of peace, making relation with the whole world as one family and not selfishly confining it to a limited circle but like a god making connection with all. How divine is the picture of Sri Krishna! Cast away and weaned from his parents, encircled by enemies, kings, serpents, demons in the forms of relatives like Kamsa, Sisupala, Kaliya Naga, Baka, Putana, etc., eager and ready to do him mischief from his infancy but unable to do him anything of the sort and dying in their vain attempts. What a noble picture of a mother! who led a life of suffering for her children and forbore to share the enjoyment of a kingdom when her sons succeeded to the throne by their victory in the great war, preferring to retire to the woods to practise religious austerities for her children's welfare. Just when the actual time for enjoyment came, Kunti retired to the woods, parting with the Pandavas in sorrow.

The zest of life loses its great point when the wit is first to laugh and not to realise the true implications of the great characters the Epics describe and illustrate. What is here in the earth below a temporary affliction in the midst of joy will be in Heaven eternal triumph, and what is here temporary triumph of happiness in case of tyrants like Ravana and Durjodhana proved eternal sorrow, everlasting despair ending in death and shame leading the way to Hell and damnation. Real heroes do not devote their thoughts to winning temporal blessings, only to part with them in sorrow. Against this the great Epic warns by examples to make the world follow the right path of virtue.

The blind Dhritarastra, unwieldy monster, threatened to swallow up his dependent nephews by the plot of burning the lac house, his son Durjodhana fleeced them of their everything at the dice-play, and when everything had failed the old wretch made his last attempt to wreak vengeance and rattled his heavy bones to crush Bhima, the most powerful of all the Pandavas at whose hands all his sons had gone to eternal rest. The wealth and kingdom the Pandavas raised by the fruits of learning and skill were robbed by the wicked to forestall and justify their death on the battlefield. To those who are in favour of the theory that might creates right, they may say, the Mahabharata describes the greatness of the Kurus and that Karna, Bhisma, Drona, Durjodhana are the heroes. But to those who believe that he who has been shown as the best ideal of his time, has lived for ages, then Yudhisthira stands pre-eminent. If the possession of the right sort of chivalry of the age be esteemed, best of all then, Arjuna, who was not a war broom like Karna, Bhisma and Drona, would stand foremost. If the scope of mind making relationship

with the spirit above, if not union, be most valuable, then come the names of Kunti and Draupadi. Sri Krishna led the Pandavas as a charioteer at the great battle with the blowing of the well-known conch Panchajonya, announcing as it were that all events in the world are God's arbitrament, as he actually did in the fight over the winning of Draupadi at her Svayambara marriage as well as at the deciding issue of the great battle in the club fight between Bhima and Durjodhana.

Human thoughts and deeds are not like ocean billows that beat the shore without any aim. Man is made and grown like the fruits of a tree. He can only be kept intact by proper education. Mere landmarks or footsteps in the sands of time cannot guide one who wants to be the beau-ideal of the world for all time to come. The age in which Yudhisthira and Sri Krishna flourished was marked with a war existing between cunning and suspicion, when misery ran free through the whole of India, and deep remorseless rage prevailed without a recognised leader, as is clear from what took place in the Rajsuya sacrifice of Yudhisthira. The great lesson of the age seems to have been preached by Yudhisthira after his dream after the great sacrifice of Rajsuya.

'Let him learn to be content even if he is to lose what he possesses. Set not thy heart on the enjoyments of the world for life of enjoyments is not the be-all and end-all of human existence. No sacrifice is too dear for the true ideal of life and its consumation. Man who realises his own power of understanding, finds the will and spirit of God in the silent working of the inner soul, exalted reason and conscience Life is a question of living with honour and good name. Prudence knows how to overcome misfortune however heavy and how to bear with patience whatever sorrow may befall. No virtue can be genuine unless it is tried. The Soul of man rests in peace where honour is well established. Reason and conscience are more valuable treasures then sovereignty or riches which can only satisfy the cravings of flesh and blood.'

All these the great Indian Epic wonderously depicts where the lessons of practical life in the moral and spiritual atmosphere are evergreen and refreshing and the heroes and heroines move with greater glory and the halo of divine light around them. Poets like Vyasa and Shakespeare presented to the world that cowards die many deaths but the wise never die but live in the annals of time more esteemed than when they actually lived and moved. Yudhisthira, the last ideal king of India from whose reign an era is running and is given in the Hindu Almanac with the names of his successors even now, did not leave any heir by Draupadi to succeed to his throne. Religious piety and virtue cannot be the property of any one by reason of descent or heredity. If it was so, Yudhisthira would have acquired it by virtue of being a son of Dharma, as he was alleged to be. Bhima would not require any practice to conquer the sons of Dhritarastra, who were persecuting him from his infancy as he was alleged to be the son of the Wind, the most

powerful. Similarly Arjuna would not require initiation in arms by practical training at the time of the forest life of the Pandavas. In the world everything has to be acquired by education and labour.

This is the first lesson of the great Epic in the opening section. Human life is divided into different stages. The first part is spent in learning discipline and training the intellectual capacities to enable one to stand on one's own legs in the world and to perform one's legitimate functions with credit. The second is spent in putting into practice what one has learnt and realised in the field of morality and politics. The third is to move in the spiritual sphere quite apart from the material field of action, to realise true love. And the fourth is either to train the future hopefuls by example or to be prepared for departure from this world leaving foot-prints on the sands of time for the future generation. This was the aim and object of the ancient ideal human life. Fortitude, perseverence, firmness and wisdom are the common fruits of ancient education in India, but universal love was a divine attribute, realisation of which helped one to ascend to heaven. One must give up the love of passion. Rama Chandra, for that purpose, was extolled as an ideal monarch. Yudhisthira was likewise extolled for patiently bearing the persecutions and the insult and calumny on his near and dear ones, *e.g.*, his mother Kunti, his wife Draupadi and his brothers, which no human being could do in the circumstances in which he fell.

The Bharata Samhita, which owed its origin to the Vedas and Vedangas, existed before Valmiki and Vyasa and dealt with the duties of men in the different stages of life and the two distinct paths of religion, *viz.*, one, for those who renounced the world, and the other, for those who held that one must pass through domestic love and study, by controlling the senses, and realising and worshipping divine love. Narayana, Sanat Kumara, Narada, Brihaspati, Bhrigu and others were such great sages. The great Epic Mahabharata gives what Vyasa made from the materials that had existed before him, in the discourses between Manu, Narada, Kapila, Sanat Kumara and others, which were quoted along with Pancharatra, etc. The traditions handed down as illustrations of intricacies on morality, religion and philosophy were not left out. The Ramayana says:—

> " Thus good Valmiki, sage divine,
> Rehearsed the Tale of Raghu's line,
> As Narada, heavenly saint, before
> Had traced the story's outline o'er."
> ** ** ** ** ** **
> " And many a tale and legend old
> By holy Visvamitra told".*

* Griffith's English verse translation Book I, Canto III,

"After listening to the various sacred and wonderful stories of the Mahabharata composed by Krishna Dwaipayana,—those that were fully recited by Vaishampayana at the great Snake sacrifice held by that noble-hearted royal sage, the prince of all princes, the son of Parikshit, Janmejoya,"† he wanted to hear more on certain specified questions. But there is another version in Chapter V, in the questions and answers as will appear. Sounaka said:—"I am desirous of hearing the history of the Vrigu race (3)." Souti said "What has also been studied by my father has been acquired by me (5)." Chapter XII, verse 6, Ruru, the grandson of Chyavana heard the story of Astika from his father Pramati which Souti describes in the next Chapter XIII, 6 verse: "The Brahmanas call this history recited by Krishna Dwaipayana, a Purana. His father Lomaharsana, a disciple of Vyasa, recited it to the dwellers of Naimisharanya, he heard it from him." Chapter XVI amplifies it. Chapter XLIX describes the death of King Parikshit in answer to a question by Sounaka. The real answer to the first question begins with Chapter LX, verses 18—20. This is the real beginning of the Souti edition of the Mahabharata. Chapter LXII says:—'(verse 12) Vaisampayana said in answer to questions put by king Janmejoya in the following verses: 'O great King! Appoint a time to hear it. This history is very extensive.' He did not recite it in the Snake sacrifice but Harivamsa says it was recited in the Horse sacrifice of Janmejoya. Verse 39 in Chapter LXII, Adi Parva, explains the origin of the name of the great Epic as the history of the Bharata princes borne out in Chapter XCIX, verse 48, in the very version of Vaisampayana, and it begins with the account of King Santanu in Chapter C. It will thus appear that the original Mahabharata is not connected with the Pandavas. The Mahabharata of the Pandavas might have been composed after the Ramayana of Valmiki. The Devi Bhagabata mentions that Vyasa sought advice from Valmiki before publishing his Mahabharata.

The table of contents says that the Bharata Samhita of 8800 verses, so very difficult to grasp, was materialised into 24000 verses without the anecdotes. The equal number of verses of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, is, no doubt, very significant; one must have imitated the other. The numericals show the different stages of time. There is one, three, five, seven and ultimately the digit of nine developed. In the beginning there was one God who became three with the Vedas of that number and three divisions of the world, then five gods till it became seven with seven sages, seven divisions of the world, ocean, islands,

† The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter I, verses 9—11.

seven horses of the Sun, seven tongues of fire, seven colours, seven notations of music, seven Samas, seven days in a week, seven limbs of the body politic, seven generations, seven paces in a marriage ceremony and so forth. In the days, of science, astronomy and astrology the planets were propitiated and they are nine in number and the sun was the regent of the planets who presided over human destiny.

The Sun was worshipped by Yajnavalkya and he discovered the Vedas worshipping the Sun. Yudhisthira in his exile worshipped the Sun and received the boon of finding food without the kingdom as a gift. It may mean that the great king utilised the forest life with the cultivation of the waste land and made India prosperous, as the incarnation of God was plough-bearing Balarama and not Sri Krishna. It will be seen that the Bharata Samhita is the nucleus of the Indian Epics and the Bharata princes descended from the sons of Bharata. Bharadvaja was closely connected with the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and his son Drona played an important part in the great plot of the Kuru-Pandava Mahabharata.

Bharata is the brother of Rama, the other of that name to whom the name of Bharatavarsha owed its origin and another the famous king Bharata, son of the well-known Dushmanta and Sakuntala, grandson of the royal sage Visvamitra, who was equally connected with the Ramayana. The sages Vasistha, Bhrigu and Agastya were no less famous and played conspicuous parts in the two Epics. The Nahusa and Agastya incidents connect the Mahabharata with the Pandava Yudhisthira which is very interesting. This is the real beginning of the great Epic, if the truth be told, of the edition with which the great Pandava Yudhisthira was connected. It runs as follows:—

"Bhisma said:—The royal sage Nahusa, O monarch, having penances for wealth, acquired the sovereignty of the celestial region by his own good deeds. With controlled senses, O king, he lived in the celestial region, engaged in doing diverse acts of both human and celestial nature. From that great king flowed various kinds of human acts and various kinds of celestial deeds, also, O king. The various rites with respect to the sacrificial fire, the collection of sacred fuel and of Kusha grass, as also of flowers and the presentation of Vali consisting of food adorned with fried paddy, and the offer of incense and of light,—all these, O monarch, occured daily in the house of that great king while he lived in the celestial region. Indeed, though living in the celestial region, he celebrated the sacrifice of recitation and the sacrifice of meditation. O chastiser of foes, Nahusa, although he had become the king of the deities, yet adored all the deities, as he used to do formerly, with due rites and ceremonies. Some time after, Nahusa realized his position as the king of all the deities. This filled him with pride. From that time all his deeds were suspended. Filled with pride on account of the boon he had received from all the celestials, Nahusa caused the very Rishis to bear him on

their shoulders. On account, however, of his abstention from all religious acts, his energy began to wane. The time was very long for which Nahusa filled with arrogance, continued to employ the foremost of Rishis, having penances for wealth, as the bearers of his vehicles. He made the Rishis perform by turns this humiliating work. The day came when it was Agastya's turn to carry the vehicle, O Bharatas. At that time, Bhrigu, that foremost of all persons conversant with Brahma, went to Agastya while the latter was seated in his hermitage; and addressing him said: -'O great ascetic, why should we patiently suffer such indignities inflicted on us by this wicked Nahusa who has become the king of the deities. Agastya said: -'How can I succeed in cursing Nahusa, O great Rishi? You know how the boon-giving (Brahman) himself has given Nahusa the best of boons. Coming to the celestial region, the boon that Nahusa prayed for, was that, whoever would come within the range of his vision, would be deprived of all energy and come within his control. The Self born Brahman granted him this boon, and it is therefore that neither yourself nor I have been able to consume him. Forsooth, it is for this reason that no one else amongst the foremost of Rishis has been able to consume or throw him down from his elevated position. Formerly, O lord, nectar was given by Brahman to Nahusa for drinking. Therefore we can do nothing to him. The great god, it appears, gave that boon to Nahusa for plunging all creatures into grief. That wretched man behaves most unrighteously towards the Brahmanas. O foremost of all speakers, tell us what should be done under the circumstances. Forsooth, I shall do what you will advise.' Bhrigu said: —' It is at the command of the Grandfather that I have come to you with the view of counteracting the power of Nahusa, who is gifted with great energy but who has been stupefied by fate. The exceedingly wicked being who has become the king of the celestials, will to-day yoke you to his car. With the help of my power I shall to-day hurl him down from his position as Indra on account of his having transcended all restraints. I shall to-day, in your very sight, re-establish the true Indra in his position, —him, viz., who has celebrated a hundred horse sacrifices,—having hurled the wicked and sinful Nahusa from that seat. That impious king of the celestials will to-day insult you by a kick, on account of his understanding being afflicted by fate and for bringing about his own downfall. Enraged at such an insult I shall to-day curse that sinful wretch, that enemy of the Brahmanas, who has transcended all restraints, saying, -Be you metamorphosed into a snake. Before your eyes, O great ascetic, I shall to-day hurl down on the earth the wicked Nahusa who shall be deprived of all power on account of the cries of "Fie" that will be uttered from all sides. Indeed, I shall hurl down Nahusa to-day, that sinful man, who has, besides, been stupefied by lordship and power. I shall do this, if you like it, O ascetic.' Thus addressed by Bhrigu, Mitravaruna's son Agastya, of unfading power and glory, became highly pleased and freed from every anxiety."*

"Bhisma said:—'The king of the celestials, on account of his abstention from observing the ordinances about the offers of incense and light, began to decline in power. His sacrificial rites and presents were obstructed by Rakshasas. It was at this time that Nahusa yoked that foremost of Rishis, viz., Agastya, to his car. Possessed of great strength Nahusa, smiling all the while, set that great Rishi speedily to the task, commanding him to bear the vehicle from the banks of the Saraswati. At this time, Bhrigu, possessed of great energy, addressed the son of Mitravaruna, saying:—' Do you shut your eyes till I enter into the matted locks

*The Mahabharata, Chapter XCIX, Anushasana Parva, verses 4—39.

on your head.—Having said this, Bhrigu of unfading glory and great energy entered into the matted locks of Agastya, who stood still like a wooden post, for hurling king Nahusa from the throne of Heaven. Soon after Nahusa saw Agastya approach him, for bearing his car. Seeing the king of the celestials, Agastya addressed him, saying:—'Do you yoke me to your vehicle forthwith! To what region shall I bear you. O lord of the celestials, I shall bear you to the spot which you may be pleased to direct'!—Thus addressed by him, Nahusa caused the ascetic to be yoked to his car. Bhrigu, who was living within the matted locks of Agastya, became highly pleased at this act of Nahusa. He took care not to look at Nahusa. Fully acquainted with the power which the illustrious Nahusa had acquired on account of the boon which Brahman had granted him, Bhrigu acted thus. Agastya also though treated by Nahusa in this way, did not yield to anger. Then, O Bharata, king Nahusa urged Agastya on with his goad. The pious Rishi did not still yield to anger. The lord of the celestials, himself enraged, then struck Agastya on the head with his left foot. When the Rishi was thus struck on the head, Bhrigu, who was living within Agastya's matted locks, became incensed and cursed the sinful, Nahusa saying:—'Since you have struck with your foot on the head of this great Rishi, do you, therefore, fall down on the Earth, changed into a snake. O wretch of wicked understanding—Thus, imprecated by Bhrigu who had not been seen, Nahusa, forthwith became transformed into a snake and dropped down on the Earth. O chief of Bharata's race!—If, O monarch, Nahusa had seen Bhrigu, the latter would not then have succeeded, by his power, in hurling the former down on the Earth. On account of the various gifts that Nahusa had made, as also his penances and religious observances, though hurled down on the Earth, O King, he succeeded in keeping his memory. He then began to propitiate Bhrigu with a view to get rid of the curse. Agastya also, filled with mercy, joined Nahusa in pacifying Bhrigu for the termination of the curse. At last Bhrigu felt mercy for Nahusa and arranged for the working out of the curse. Bhrigu said:—'There will appear a king (on Earth) of the name of Yudhisthira, the foremost of his race. He will rescue you from this curse!'—Having said this, the Rishi disappeared from the presence of Nahusa. Agastya also, of great energy, having thus performed the business of the true Indra, that arbitrator of a hundred sacrifices, returned to his hermitage, adored of all members of the regenerate order."*

It is evident that when the Pandava king Yudhisthira flourished the Brahmans were degraded from their original position. Sri Krishna wanted them to be regenerated and the great war was waged to kill the Indian Epicurus Charvaka and his followers, not to speak of using the wealth not for luxury and tyranny but for relieving suffering humanity. Cows were the great wealth of Ancient India and with their milk the children were nursed and it also replaced animal food by the delicacies of butter, curd, etc., the favourite food of Sri Krishna. The names of Indian celebrities linger in the important events of their lives. The creator Daksha Prajapati first made a present to Shiva of a bull with a certain kine and the great god Shiva accepted the present. The bull became his carrier and he used the figure of a bull as the emblem

The Mahabharata, Chapter C, Anushasana Parva, verses 13—31.

on his banner, and he was known by the name of Brishavadhavaja.* The gift of a cow is very much praised as it was a great source of blessing to all. Nahusa ransomed the sage Cyavana, whom the fishermen brought to the king, with the gift of a cow and not with any other wealth.† The fishermen presented the cow to the sage Cyavana and went to heaven for the gift, being freed from every sin. The words of Cyavana speak of his poverty:—

"Chayavana said:—The eye of a poor or distressed person, the eye of an ascetic, or the eye of a snake of dreadful poison, consume a man with his very roots even as a fire, that burning with the aid of the wind consumes a stack of dry grass or straw. I shall accept the cow that you wish to present me. Ye fishermen, freed from every sin, go ye to heaven forthwith, with these fishes also that ye have caught with your nets."‡

The boon with which the great king Nahusa was blessed, is worthy of notice. It is said:—

"Then the highly energetic king Nahusa, that lord of all the Earth, filled with joy, O best of the Bharatas, said:—'Sufficient.' Like a second Indra, the king of the celestials, he accepted the boon about his own steadiness in virtue. The Rishis having granted him the boon, the delighted king adored them both with great respect."§

This king Nahusa was converted into a big snake by the curse of Bhrigu and he was released by Yudhisthira during his exile in the wood like Ahalya by Rama. All these read like romances. The salvation of soul rests on what is said in the quotation given below:—(Vana Parva, Chapter CLXXXI, verses 42-43):—"Truthfulness, self-control, asceticism, benevolence, unenviousness and adherence to virtue and not birth or illustrious family are the true means of human salvation."

Nahusa is not mentioned as one of the celebrated kings in the table of contents of the great Epic, yet his account of Yudhisthira's advent on the earth like Bhagiratha is mentioned. The Sagar's sons were cursed by Kapila and Bhagiratha became famous by releasing them from the curse of the sage by diverting the sacred Ganges. The Ramayana gives an account of Nahusa's reigning in heaven at the time of the fight between Britta and Indra with the name of his father and grandfather and the place where the meeting of Pururaba with Urbasi took place. It was at the city of Pratisthana. Yajati is compared in Canto 68, verse 7, VII Book, as a controller of his senses and he is mentioned as one of the celebrated kings of India in the table of contents with the king Bhagiratha. Agastya was engaged by King Rama

* The Mahabharata, Anushasana Parva, Chapter LXXVII, verses 27-28.
† Ditto Chapters L and LI.
‡ Anushasana Parva, Chapter LI, verses 38-39.
§ The Mahabharata, Anushasana Parva, Chapter LI, verses 43-44.

to perform his horse sacrifice (41 Canto, Ramayana VII). In the Ramayana, Agastya played a very important part and was closely associated with Rama in his exploits. Rama and Nahusa thus became contemporary kings of India.

In verses 230—239, table of contents, the names of Pouranic kings are found. The names of Rama and Nahusa are not mentioned amongst them. Although it is clearly said that there were many others who were not mentioned, yet it must be inferred that such great characters like Rama and Nahusa could not have escaped notice if they belonged to Pouranic Yuga. The name of Janmejoya was there amongst the list of celebrated kings but that of Parikshit is nowhere, although the great Epic mentions no less than three names belonging to different periods and one to the family of the Ikshaku. These are, of course the great riddles of the Indian Epics yet unsolved. The Puranas and Epics never meant to give the genealogies of the distinguished families of kings and their relationship. They were not the works of the bards or minstrels attached to the Royal houses, but when the Epics assumed that character, attempts were unsuccessfully made to trace the genealogies of kings from traditions more with a view to please the distinct royal families of kings or with a view to make future connections with other royal families in India than anything else.

Valmiki and Vyasa were Vedic scholars and glorious sages; their original works were lost in the revisions. Their disciples, Vaisampayana, Jaimini, Yajnavalkya published their versions, which were revised in the university of Saunaka and the Sutas recited them in the royal sacrifices. Thus the Indian Epics went on changing with the progress of time, introducing new characters like Bhisma, Drona and Karna. The Ramayana became the heroic poem of the Ikshakus but could not fully divest itself of the source from which it originated, *i.e.*, the Bharata Samhita.

If the current Mahabharata is carefully and critically read as a whole, noting the connecting links between the different divisions and the bearings of apparently isolated themes on the other themes, most of the doubtful problems will find solution. The first and foremost of all questions seems to be—what was the original theme of the great Epic?

All great works begin with a prologue and the great Epic is not without the traditional prologue. Souti, the renowned reciter, opens it as returning from the shrine of Samanta Panchaka or the five pools in Kurukshettra, where the great Brahmana warrior Avatar of Vishnu, Parasurama, is reputed to have offered oblations to the manes of his

ancestors with the blood of the Kshatriyas killed by him in his several crusades against them. It is thus to be seen that Parasurama is represented to have established hagiarchy in India. The Brahmanas from the days of King Vena are represented to have been the king-makers of India and the Mahabharata is not so much a tale of Kshatriya valour and prowess on the field of Kurukshettra as of the supremacy and omnipotence of the sages and the Brahmanas whose powers, more effective and deadly than of the Gods themselves, are represented to have performed miracles and prodigies and created kings and kingdoms or hurled them down to eternal perdition as they chose by the simple fiat of their will.

The sage Agastya, entreated by the Gods, quaffed off the whole ocean, the foot-print of Bhrigu adorns the breast of Vishnu, Kasyapa banished the terrific Parasurama outside the Aryabarta, Indra could not kill Asuras without the help of Dadhichi's bone and the help of Vashistha or Brihaspati, Chyavana forced Indra to agree to give a share of sacrificial oblations to the Asvini Kumars and the sage Astika saved the fall of Indra into the sacrificial fire of Janmejoya by the powers of his asceticism. Rama, an Avatar of God, could not kill Ravana without the assistance of the sage Agastya. The sages Parasara and Chanda-bhargava could think of exterminating whole races of demons and serpents by performing sacrifices and would have done it if they were not prevailed upon to desist from the same. The sages Jaya and Upjaya, like Rishyasringa, could, by sacrifices, bring about the birth of heroes who could kill Drona, Bhisma and Ravana. In short, there was nothing human or superhuman which the ancient Brahman sages and saints of India could not accomplish.

The Mahabharata in this sense is a sort of hagiology and depicts a hagiarchy in the renowned eleven victories of Parasurama over Kshatriya kings like Kartavirjirna in Ancient India. The great Epic speaks of the greatness of the sage Utamka in the first Parva Pousya and Asvamedha Parva too, the greatness of the Bhrigu family in the Poulama Parva, Bana, and Anushasana also and in Astika and other Parvas, and of the mighty deeds and powers of sages, mightier than the powers of arms of the heroes of the Kurukshettra field. The powerful Kings Dasaratha, Pandu and Parikshita died from the effects of curses of Brahmanas. The great King Nahusa went to heaven and was not only hurled down from it but was transformed into a snake and was not released until Yudhisthira enlightened him with the glory and attributes of a Brahman. All these speak of hagiarchy and hagiology as also a sort of hagiolatry in the Indian Epics.

The great Epic in Santi and Anushasana Parvas gives the great warning counsels in the Aila-Kasyapa and Pabana-Arjuna discourses to the famous progenitors of the two lines of ancient kings of India to show respect to Brahmans otherwise malice between them brings forth disastrous results in destruction and disruption. Gifts to priests are urged in the Anushasana Parva and are considered to be the great redeemers of all sins of omission or commission on the earth below. The Indian Epics disclose the different schools of thought of ancient India with the theories, tenets and practices of the different schools, illustrated by telling impressive stories and anecdotes, and they are not mere heroic poems narrating only great achievements of renowned heroes and heroines after the manner of the literal 'Epic'.

The Ramayana without its two component parts Adhyata and Yogavasistha cannot be called complete by itself, like the Mahabharata. The Adhyatma Ramayana is attributed to Vyasa as it belongs to the Vedantist School and philosophy, whereas Yogavasistha Ramayana is but an appendage to the Ramayana by Valmiki himself in the form of illustrative anecdotes narrated by Vasistha, the great priest of the Ikshaku family of Kings, to his illustrious pupil Rama on the subject of the best means of attaining true felicity and happiness on the earth below and in heaven above.

The Epics bear definite internal evidence in the very many discourses not only for the solutions of the several knotty problems which have puzzled the intelligent world but also to show the different stages of development of the Epics, fixing the periods of the different revisions and marking the interpolations. Vyasa, Valmiki, or Vaisampayana had nothing to do with the Yoga system of philosophy or the theory of transmigration of souls with which Patanjali and Yajnavalkya were identified. Vyasa and Valmiki were Vedic scholars and grammarians and the Mahabharata is a contribution to dispense with the reading of the Vedas, making it accessible to the mass. The particular school of Yajurvedic priests transformed the original Bharata Samhita as a manual of Yajurvedic sacrifices and rituals and it was hence called "the birth place of the warrior caste". Weber has shown that the Satapatha Brahmana, a text of Yajur Veda, stands in peculiarly close relation to the didactic Epic. It is said that the Vaisyas are derived from the Rig Veda, the Kshatriyas from the Yajur Veda, and the Brahmans from the Sama Veda. In Gita the Sama Veda stands as the best (Chapter X, verse 22) and its position with the Yajur is not made clear. It is clear in the ode to God by sage Upamanyu in the Anushasana Parva, Chapter XIV, verse 319, "Thou art the Sama Veda

among the Vedas, the Satarudria among the Yajur hymns, Sanatkumara among Yogins and Kapila among Samkhyas." This Upamanyu is mentioned as a pupil in the Pousya Parva. That the Yoga system of philosophy is connected with the Epics as well as Samkhya is also evident. Patanjali admits a Pandu Epic in his account of the dramatic representation of the sacred legend indissolubly connected with the tale (390 Hopkins). The sage Astika, who stopped the snake sacrifice of King Janmejoya, was found to be present when the king saw his dead father Parikshit and the sage Saurika saw his dead son Sringi through the religious asceticism of Vyasa, who in like manner assuaged the grief of the bereaved family of the dead heroes who fell in the field of Kurukshettra. This proves the theory of Satapatha Brahman and the Yoga system of philosophy with which Yajnavalkya and Patanjali were identified. In the table of contents of the Mahabharata it is mentioned as Karsnaveda which, no doubt, refers not to such Yajur Veda of Yajnavalkya, though a Western scholar wrongly supposed it to refer to Krishna worship. (Macdonald).

The Mahabharata and the Ramayana owed their origin to the Bharata Samhita, which began with the discourses between Brahma and Rudra, Narayana and Narada, Sanat Kumar and Narada, Narada and King Senajit, Narada and Vyasa, Vyasa and Suka, and the Bharata Samhita seems to have been repeated in the time of King Santanu as Bhisma stated to Yudhisthira in Santi Parva as having heard it from King Santanu (Chapter CCCXXXVI) agreeing as it does with the table of contents in the Adi Parva beginning with the account of king Uparichar in the time of Svyambhubha Manu, when the worship of Narayana and Sarasvati is mentioned as is found in the well-known invocation verse. It was made by seven sages Marichi, Atri, Angira, Pulasta, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasistha, who assumed the collective name of Chitrasikhandi. In that account a distinct reference is made to the Ramayana and the sages Ekata and Dvita were transformed into monkeys due to their malice towards their brother Trita, described in the Mahabharata (Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXL, verses 83, 84.) King Santanu heard this account from the mouth of the sage Asita Devala (Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXXL, verses 118 and 119.)

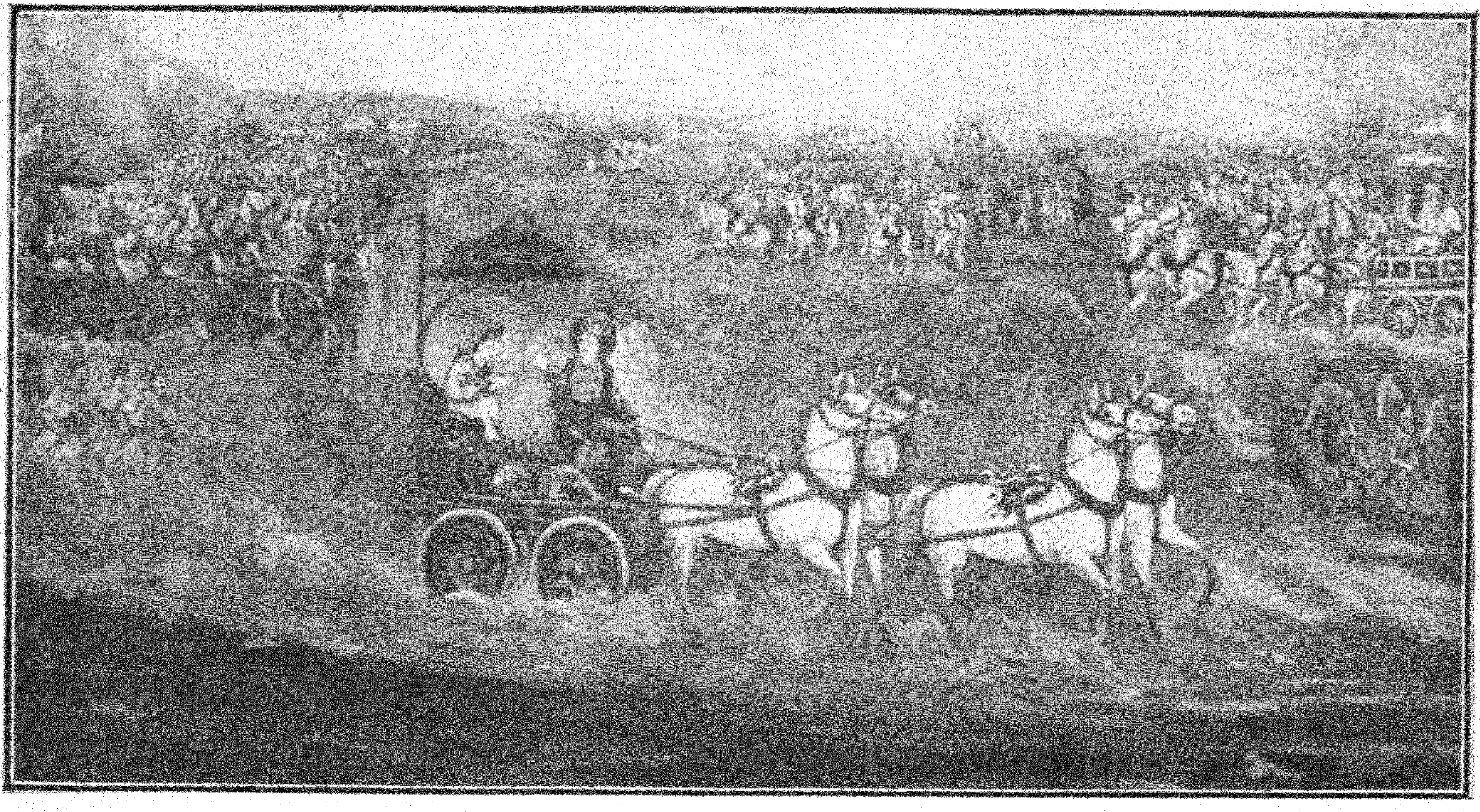
The Mahabharata contains discourses between Sounaka and Janmejoya I, Sanatsujata and Dhritarasthra, Samjoya and Dhritarasthra, Krishna and Basudev, Bhisma and Yudhisthira, Krishna and Arjuna, Vaisampayana and Janmejoya II, Souti and Sounaka, and last though not least between Yajnavalkya and Janaka, where it is very clearly mentioned that he undid the work of his uncle Vaisampayana out of spite

(Santi Parva, CCCXLIV). The Nara Narayana edition of the Mahabharata took place in King Satanik's time—whose preceptor was Yajnavalkya—and he was the patron and propagator of the laws of Vishnu and declared the powers of Hari. Sounaka followed the King, heard the collection of the Mahabharata and composed the first Kalpasutra (*vide* Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," p. 231). King Satanika was the son of Janmejoya and, being the direct descendant of Arjuna's line and connected on his mother's side with Sri Krishna and the Yadavas, he might have been interested in the Nara Narayana edition of the Mahabharata from the nucleus of Gita Upanishada. To solace the old king Dhristarastra, Samjoya first conceived the idea of ascribing the victory in the field of Kurukshettra to God Sri Krishna and not to the prowess of the Pandavas, as is clearly mentioned in the table of contents.

The eighteen Purans and the eighteen sections of the Mahabharata are ascribed to Vyasa. It may mean that Vyasa was the source of all the knowledge embodied in them and possibly Vyasa was not meant to be the actual author of all these different books, just like all publications under the name and authority of any University extending over a period of many years, may after a number of years be ascribed to the authorship of one man only.

The Asrambasika Parva describes the different appearances of the five Pandavas and their wives, where Yudhisthira among the Pandava brothers is named first, and Draupadi among the Pandava wives is named first, meaning her as the wife of Yudhisthira, and where Bhima, Arjuna, Nakul and Sahadeb are each separately named with the names of their respective wives. If Draupadi had been the wife of Bhima, Arjuna, Nakul and Sahadeb, her name would certainly have been mentioned while mentioning the names of the wives of the four junior Pandavas, which along with the other internal evidence shorn of the interpolations, show the utter baselessness of the tradition of Draupadi being the wife of all the five brothers.

The same Parva describes the characteristics of Dhritarastra and Kunti in their own words and also contains criticisms on the other characters of the Epic, and the Mousal Parva puts in the mouth of Arjuna that all the Pandavas and Draupadi were really one, which might mean that the five Pandavas were the five attributes of man essential for success and Draupadi was the personification of that success, or in other words, that Yudhisthira alone was the only original character in the Epic, the other brothers and Draupadi being fictitious personifications of the different attributes and success of Yudhisthira.



Sri Krishna remonstrates with Arjuna on the latter refusing to fight at the battle of Kurukshettra.
(Reproduced by kind permission of His Highness the Maharaja of Benares.)

The great Epic represents Sri Krishna as having no concern with material success or prosperity, and shows Siva to be the God to be sought for material prosperity. In the Epic Sri Krishna never tells Arjuna that he would initiate him in his weapon, the Sudarsan Chakra, or that he would destroy the Kuru forces and secure him success. For weapons and success in war he advised Arjuna to worship Goddess Durga and Siva. Even Krishna himself, while desiring a son for his wife Satyabhama, is shown to have prayed to Siva. The Epic clearly represented Krishna as the dispenser of spiritual benefit and not material benefit. For such a Sri Krishna to tell Arjuna, as he is made to tell him in the Bhagabat Gita, that he had already killed all the Kuru forces etc. is a contradiction of a gross nature. Krishna is never shown in the Epic to have cursed anybody or to have granted any boon to anybody except to Utamka, *viz.*, that he would be a cloud and supply water to the earth, which was of a spiritual nature, *i.e.*, for the good of the world by producing rain. The spiritual part of the fruition of this boon, *viz*., conversion of the cloud into rain, finds a parallel in the Brittasanhar by the Vedic god Indra, for Britta is cloud and killing the cloud by Indra's thunder is poetry for the prosaic fact of conversion of cloud into rain by the action of thunder and lightning.

The unfolding of Sri Krishna's divine love and his divinity is shown from his birth till his death. At all stages of his life he is shown detached from worldly connections and attachments. At his birth he is weaned from his parents and grows up and is fostered in a place where he had no blood relations, but loves everybody and everybody loves him ; in his youth he weans himself off from the associates and friends of his boyhood and goes to his natural parents, but after endearing himself to the people there and establishing his mighty power, he again gives up all and detaches himself from all and goes to a distant place and founds an empire of love with the princesses of India at Dwarka in the midst of the ocean. In the great fight at Kurukshettra, the material part of his assistance, consisting of his vast army, he gives to the Kurus and only the spiritual part of his assistance goes to the good Pandavas. His nephew Abhimanyu was killed in unfair fight by all the heroes of the Kuru side, but he never breathed a word of curse against the Kurus for that. On the contrary, when Gandhari, to whose sons he had lent the assistance of his whole Narayani Army, wanted to curse him for the destruction of the Kurus, with perfect unconcern for his and his family's welfare, he gladly took upon him the curse of Gandhari. When after all he returns to his kingdom and eventually Gandhari's curse takes effect, he shows no wailings or concern for the destruction of his family and with the noblest unconcern he disappears,

sending Jara, who shot him with his arrow and fell at his feet from earth by his love. The true implication of all this was to show his absolute absence of attachment for wordly matters or material prosperity and his spiritual and divine nature.

It is said that there can be no incarnation of god at all in philosophy. But the Hindu theory of incarnation is only in respect of one of the Hindu Triad Vishnu, who is described as preserver and sustainer between the creator Brahma and the destroyer Shiva. The theory of incarnation is the descent of the Divine Narayana on the earth in a human body to accomplish some object and to show success in a particular sphere whose need was the sorest. It is for this that the title of the Epic is 'Jaya,' or the Book of Success. The conception of incarnation is not really deification. Sri Krishna was not an incarnation but was an emblem of divine love and power. Sri Krishna proved by his great example how disinterested human love can be the stepping stone to divine love. Sri Krishna of the Mahabharata was the charioteer or guide of Arjuna to restore peace and tranquility by removing the reign of blind malice, wickedness and tyranny typified in Durjodhana, Kansa, Sisupala, etc. Sri Krishna was a reformer in the sense of changing the old order of things and establishing the kingdom of disinterested divine love, typified in the reign of Yudhisthira and the destruction of Charvaka, whose easy epicurean theory of life was then prevalent amongst Brahmanas. It is for this it is said that the root of the Mahabharata lies in Krishna, Brahma and Brahmanas. The greatness of Sri Krishna is his godliness, demonstrated in all his actions in the great Epic.

The source and growth of ancient Indo-Aryan society, religion, culture, literature and civilization are vividly reflected in the great Epic and to do this the Pousya, Poulama and Astika Parvas were added by way of introduction by the great Yajnavalkya, as is clearly mentioned in the Pousya Parva. The Anukramanika and Parva Sangraha Chapter as a synopsis or table of contents of the great Epic must have been added at a still later age.

The reputed authors of the Epics, Vyasa and Valmiki, were blackened in the Buddhistic age, by making one the offspring of guilty intercourse and the other a robber. But the mischief failed to efface the grandeur of their noble characters, which had already got a firm hold on the minds of the people. They looked upon them as gods or demigods and no vilification or calumny could detract from their noble characters or dislodge them from the position of esteem and reverence in which they were enshrined, The Indian Epics were degraded by the

Buddhists with a motive during the period of Buddhistic ascendency, but at the time of the Hindu revival Sankaracharya explained the great Epic as a great manual illustrative of the institutes of law, religion, and morality. The sacrifices displayed the beneficient and philanthropic nature of the position of the king, who was shown as gathering money, not for self-aggrandisement or personal pleasures, but for giving it away for the good of the people. It was found that pure gold without alloy could not take high polish and was not fit for preparing ornaments, etc., so the pure Epic was not thought fit to captivate the imagination of the mass and it was therefore subjected to great alterations and dramatic colourings.

The revisers, instead of wholesale casting off of the popular but mischievous additions of the Buddhistic age, took great care to devise means for interpreting the real truths to the intelligent at the sections at the end of the book. This is perhaps the only explanation of those themes in the Epic which were against the laws and customs of Ancient India. And this would explain the inclusion of Yavana and Buddhistic glory in the stories of Arjuna's defeat at the hand of Yavanas, Ahirs and Savirs. The glorification of vegetable offerings instead of animal offerings at sacrifices, as illustrated in the story of King Uparichar Basuhoma's fall for offering animal sacrifice, was the work of the Buddhistic age. The exhortation of charity and protection of animals as the best of all virtues, as illustrated in the story of King Sibi's going to haven for possessing that virtue, also speaks of the same Buddhistic influence in it. The enigmatic "five-husbands" story of Draupadi bespeaks the same Buddhistic influence of Tibetans, who once held sway over India and amongst whom the custom still prevails.

The civilisation and culture of the world is, to a very great extent, bound up with the lives and deeds of its great men, who were models of moral and spiritual guides, kings, queens, ministers, law-givers, great reformers, silent workers and who founded or propounded religious orders, customs, gotras (families), empires, laws, cults, caste system, etc. Vyasa and Valmiki were profound Vedic scholars and grammarians with sound knowledge of Upanishads and Vedanta and were poets as well. They explained the intricacies and mysteries of the Vedic literature and those of the philosophy of love and religion by the living examples of the great characters in their Epics. Indian Epic literature has been classical rather than poetical. Vyasa is immortalised and living in all times. Though he lived and wrote in a period of hoary antiquity, he seems to belong to all climes and times. He is the author of everything valuable and learned in ancient religious literature. His characters are original, independent, and natural and bear no close

resemblance to one another, and the views put in their mouths and preserved in the Epic can teach the modern world on all important questions of religion, philosophy, theology and love. The Mahabharata will be the lasting memorial of Vyasa till the end of the world, and his great ideal characters seem to be live characters moving even now, inspite of the unreal colouring lent to them by the dramatic revisions and alterations. The lives and characters of the great heroes and heroines of the Indian Epics were the direct outcome of the education they received in their early age and their culture. The Pandavas became sturdy, painstaking, religious through their training in the forest school, while the Kurus grew wicked, irreligious and wily through being brought up amidst the dissipating and voluptuous influences of the school of court life.

Religion proposes to establish the welfare of society by positive regulations and lays down a code for the government of mankind in all the varied walks of life to restrain human passions. Epic illustrations help in great measure to do the important work of regulating society by presenting pictures of human greatness in the great characters of the past in such a manner as will sway the heart of man or woman in every period of civilisation. The Epics build the temple of religion full of majesty, to which the worshippers may approach in the hope of obtaining mercy by penitence and by taking note of the sad end of sinful delights. The Epics by their contrasting characters make an enquiry into the delights and pleasures of human life, into the love of country, home, family, king, preceptor, law, custom, ambitions of life and the glory of god in religion and love. The Epics present pictures of vicious habits against the virtuous conduct of great men, adding new charms to every rational pleasure, refining the taste of mankind in general. Religion augments the enjoyments of taste. Taste depends on the culture of a man or a woman. Religion does not resemble those scenes of natural beauty where every object smiles. Beauty consists in certain peculiar lines, forms, features, colours, complexions, motions, movements, and posings which the eye discovers and appeals to the heart, till it becomes a taste with a man or a woman. Nature and art continually furnish the cultivated mind with the sources of gratification; religion and philosophy confer upon taste the most exquisite enjoyments. The highest enjoyments of taste depend upon the state of mind and culture of heart. Vulgar and refined tastes are as the poles asunder. The different emotions which the same objects present are quite clear. They speak of the influence of teaching, calling and society if not of culture. The highest or lowest enjoyments of taste depend upon the associations of the mind, according to its elevation or depravity.

The fine arts of poetry, painting and music cannot be appreciated by illiterate human beings. The celebrated men were indebted for the establishment of their fame to the nature of their subjects in their productions. Homer and Virgil were carried away by the popular superstition of their days and by means of the established mythology excited interest. Religion unfriendly to innocent gratification, adds new charm to every rational pleasure and refines the taste, while it cultivates the heart which can purify human enjoyments on earth in the midst of which flourishes the tree of immortality which Vyasa conceived.

Religious influence outlives all earthly enjoyments. There is a delight in the very despising of sinful delights to have some spiritual joy. Things lawful in themselves are in their excess sinful and bring bitterness in the end, but spiritual joy ends in eternal bliss and happiness. Vyasa has made a religion of joy. Happiness is inculcated as a duty. The glory of God is reflected in the progress of the soul towards perfection, in the vicissitudes of life to plant a tree of universal love so that suffering humanity may repose beneath its shade and feel the virtue of its healing leaves, so that bleeding nations of malice disappear in the gigantic forms of Drona, Bhisma, Drupad, Durjodhana and Karna, so that all the kindred of the human family are knitted together in one common, bond of amity and love and the warrior shall be a character unknown except in the page of history to excite hatred of the world. 'Such fate ambition finds'. The purity of soul of Bhisma, when stained with the contagion of guilt, dies a death of enduring pain on the bed of arrows. The great war of Kurukshettra depicts the pomp and power of the great kings and heroes of India who fell like a structure made of a pack of cards before the silent artillery of divine love in the moral forces of the Pandavas and their allies with the symbol of success in Sri Krishna. The sight of the ocean derives a considerable portion of its interest from the moral reflections which it suggests. It was for this reason the battlefield of Kurukshettra was described as something like a religious crusade.

APPENDIX A.

The text of the Mahabharata describes the actual marriage taking place first with Yudhisthira only with the priest Dhaumya officiating. After it a sage reported the marriages, on successive days, with the other Pandavas. Day after day it is described as wonderful for it is hardly believable and is based on nothing but mere hearsay evidence.

"Then that Veda-knowing priest (Dhaumya) kindled the sacred fire and poured the libations of ghee in that blazing fire with proper Mantras. That Mantra-knowing Brahman then called Yudhisthira and united him with Krishna (Draupadi) Walking round the fire (for seven times), the bride and the bridegroom took each other's hands. Thus they were married by the Veda-knowing (Dhaumya). Then taking leave of that ornament of battle (Yudhisthira), he (Dhaumya) went out of the palace. Then those mighty car-warriors, the perpetuators of the Kuru race, those princes, attired in costly robes, took the hand of the best of women (Draupadi) day by day in succession. The celestial sage told me of a very wonderful incident, namely that the high souled lady of slender waist (Draupadi) regained her virginity day after day. (That is, every day after her previous marriage)." (Adi Parva, Chapter CC, page 273, verses 11—14.)

The Hindu marriage laws cannot sanction such a marriage as is here reported. If all the Pandavas were married together to Draupadi, all at a time with a priest, then and only then it could be held that Draupadi was married to the Pandavas but not otherwise. The wife of the elder brother is like a mother during his lifetime, and there was nothing in the institutes or customs of Ancient India to legalise such a marriage. It might be the creation of the dramatic revisers of the Mahabharata.

One would have been inclined to believe the alleged rule said to have been established by Narada, if Arjuna was found to have really followed Brahamachariya for twelve years under the said rule and had not married Subhadra and Ulupi during the period in question. What is more, the truthful Yudhisthira did not mention anything about the rule but decided clearly that it was purely a question of propriety and nothing else. The translation of the text speaks for itself :—

"Yudhisthira said :—O hero, I know full well why you entered the room and did what you knew would be disagreeable to me. But I have not felt any displeasure with it. The younger brother may enter the room in which his elder brother sits with his wife. There is no fault to be found in this. If the elder brother enters the room where his younger brother is with his wife, then he acts against the rule of propriety. O mighty-armed hero, therefore, desist from your purpose. Do what I say. Your virtue has suffered no diminution and you have not shown any disregard towards me." (Adi Parva, Chapter CCXV, page 289, verses 31—33.)

It is evident that the alleged establishment of a rule that any of the brothers who would see another brother while he was with Draupadi would go to the forest for twelve years to lead the life of Brahmachari is a myth. Arjuna is not found to have followed it. The explanation of Ulupi is not convincing as it does not bear out the facts. Arjuna is said to have refrained from observing Brahmacharya at the command of the elder brother, but it was just the contrary and the exile of any of the brothers to adopt Brahmacharya for twelve years did not relate only to Draupadi. That was not the vow in Adi Parva, Chapter CCXIV, verses 27—29. This chapter as well as the preceeding chapters are answers to the question of Janmejoya as to why no dissensions arose among brothers when they had so beautiful a wife common to them all. But one cannot overlook that the truthful Yudhisthira mentions in the quotation given above that Draupadi was his wife and not that of the other brothers. The story of Tillottama was told in fact just after Karna's speech exhorting the Kuru prince Durjodhana to fight immediately after the marriage in Adi Parva, Chapter CCIV, verses 6 to 21.

The dice play incidents wholly unmasked the question of Draupadi's marriage, and Durjodhana and his friends in the public hall revenged the great exposure of the lac house at the Svayambara ceremony in right royal fashion. Draupadi did not take her stand as the common wife of the Pandavas, and the Pandavas could not challenge the stake of Yudhisthira in Draupadi at the dice play, though called upon to do so by Durjodhana in Sabha Parva, Chapter LXX, verses 3—6.

"Draupadi ! let the other brothers of Yudhisthira say that he is a liar and you will be set free."

Yudhisthira, the emblem of honesty and truthfulness, could never have staked Draupadi if she really were the common wife of the Pandavas. That was the great issue of the day when Draupadi was dragged in the public hall of the dice play to be revenged on the fraud of the marriage declaration of Draupadi, at the instance of Krishna perhaps, for Drupada told the Pandavas that they themselves could not think of their welfare so much as Krishna did for them.

The outspoken Bhima expressed his grief that even game-masters who keep public women do not stake them at a game of dice and what his brother did was horrible, and his hand, which staked it, was fit to be burnt. Arjuna warned him not to fulfil the objects of the Kurus, to make them fight among themselves over the matter. The boon, the old blind king Dhritarastra gave to Draupadi will speak for itself. Draupadi did not know that she would be offered a second boon after the first boon was offered. If she were really the common wife of all the Pandavas she

would have asked for the release of the Pandavas in a body with their sons, but it was not so. She only asked for her husband Yudhisthira and her only son by him. In the second boon she asked for the two heroes with their arms, and when a third boon was offered it was refused by her. From the above it is evident that Draupadi was the wife of Yudhisthira alone.

In the question of the marriage of Satyabati Bhisma's connection with the Kurus was exposed and it must be said that Bhisma was a fictitous character, brought to prominence with his father's marriage, while his own birth is wrapped up in mystery with vanishing Ganga. There is a vulgar threat used with bragging even now. "I shall show you your father's marriage" (A thing impossible). Bhisma is said to have performed the function of the match-maker of his father and was blessed with the boon of dying at will. Santanu was a mere king and could not be said to possess the power of granting such a boon, which can only be the gift of the Divine God. Bhisma seems to have monopolised the function of match making, not only of his father but of all his descendants to the time of Pandu.

It will be interesting to discuss here, from the texts of the Mahabharata the truth of such marriages. Bhisma contracted the marriage of his brother Bichitiabirya with the daughter of the king of Benares. But the internal evidence found in the Mahabharata makes one doubt this. The mother of Pandu is mentioned to be Kausalya, the princess of Kosala and not that of Benares in Adi Parva, Chapter CXXVI, and again in the next chapter, verse 24. Another marriage in which Bhisma had a hand is found to be Madri's marriage to Pandu. Madri is said to be the cause of Pandu's death, like Kekayi in the Ramayana of Dasaratha's death. Madri is said to have burnt in the funeral pyre of her husband. If that was the custom then prevalent, then all the wives of the great heroes of Kurukshettra or some of them at least would have been mentioned as having mounted the funeral pyres of their husbands, but there was no such mention in the separate Parvas of the Mahabharata.

Besides, the illustrious Pandu's death as reported by the sages in Adi Parva, (Chapter CXXVI) speaks of Pandu having one wife. The sages held a consultation amongst themselves on the death of Pandu and decided to pass a resolution that:

"The high souled and illustrious Pandu, abandoning his sovereignty and kingdom, came here to practise asceticism and received their protection. Now that he has gone to heaven it is our bounden duty to go to the kingdom with his survivors, his wife and infant sons, left in our care with his dead body so that the last rites shall be performed."

This was acted upon accordingly and they took the sons of Pandu and his wife with the dead body and made a report of the death of Pandu in the Kuru Court. The last rites of Pandu were performed in the court with due ceremony. In these circumstances it is incomprehensible that the funeral ceremony in which Madri ascended the funeral pyre of her husband should be described as having been performed in the previous chapter. There was no question put by anybody to recite in full detail the account of Pandu's death and his funeral. Besides, the cause of the death of Pandu, as disclosed by the sages has no reference to the curse of Madri's connection with Pandu. The ground given out by Madri for mounting the funeral pyre in verse 28, Adi Parva, Chapter CXXV, is not in accordance with Sati rites and this apparent anachronism cannot but be an instance of the worst kind of interpolation. It has been shown that the five Pandavas are the five forms of Indra, and Nakul and Sahadeb could not be the sons of Madri by Asvini-kumars. The portions which deal with this must naturally be also interpolations. All marriages with which Bhisma was connected seem to be mere fictions. Such kind of interpolations are not rare in the Mahabharata.

The story of Draupadi's clothes being drawn away from her body in order to make her naked in the assembly hall and the great God Krishna protecting her from being disgraced in that way is also an interpolation of the worst kind to inculcate the merit, virtue, and effect of Krishna worship. It was far from the fact. The wailing of Draupadi, the actual sufferer, before Krishna did not mention it in Bana Parva, nor did her mother-in-law Kunti speak of it in her wailing before Krishna in Udyoga Parva, nor did Krishna himself describe it in the Kuru Court in his great mission of peace when recounting the wrongs of the Kurus and their persecutions.

Draupadi bestowed her benediction on Arjuna for his success when he was starting out to excell those great reputed warriors his adversaries could command. If Arjuna was really one of the husbands of Draupadi she could not bless him in the way she did in Chapter XXXVII, Bana Parva, verses 31—34.

"O Kaunteya our kingdom and prosperity, weal or woe, are all in your hands. I give you my ashirbad (blessing) and wish you godspeed. Let success attend you for you always worship your elder brother and obey his commands."

The cause of the blessing makes the position of Draupadi clear as well as the blessing itself. Besides, if Draupadi was the wife of Arjuna, Kunti would not have sent a message to Arjuna through Krishna before the war, Chapter CXXXVII, Udyoga Parva, verse 20:—

'Tell Arjuna, that foremost of heroes, to follow whatever Draupadi would request him to do."

Bhima, after killing Kichaka in Birata Parva, Chapter XXII, verse 79, exclaimed.

"I am now absolved from the *debt of my brother*. I owed and am now in peace."

Kichaka being killed for insulting Draupadi "debt of my brother" would not have been said if Draupadi was the wife of Bhima as well.

There is another incident mentioned in the Epic which gives clear proof that none but Yudhisthira was the husband of Draupadi. In the Bana Parva, Chapter CXLIV, when Draupadi felt tired with fatigue from walking, Nakul cried out for help to his elder brother Yudhisthira, who took her up in his lap and Nakul and Sahadeb began to knead her feet. Bhima volunteered to carry her and his brothers on his shoulder, but it was at last Bhima's son Ghotatkacha who was requisitioned for the purpose. Certainly if Nakul and Sahadeb were really married to Draupadi they would not press the feet of Draupadi nor would she allow them to do so. When Nakul cried out for help Bhima, instead of Yudhisthira, would have rendered the first help himself by placing her in his lap being the strongest of all. But Nakul specially asks Yudhisthira to comfort her. Yudhisthira would not have questioned Bhima as to who would carry her if Draupadi were a common wife to all and Bhima's son would not have had to do so. What could be better proof than this that she was really not the wife of all the brothers, but of Yudhisthira alone ?

In Bana Parva Krishna solaced Draupadi with the assurance that she would be the queen :—

"If the heaven falls, the Himalaya splits, Earth rends, Ocean dries up but my words will not be false. O Draupadi thou shalt be the queen and see the wives of those who incurred your displeasure weeping in the battlefield seeing the mutilated dead bodies of their husbands. Do not grieve, I shall do all in my power to help the Pandavas. Rest assured of it.*"

Here lies the difference between Sita and Draupadi in the Epics. Draupadi was not meant to destroy Durjodhana, his brothers and family like Ravana, but she wanted to reign and rule the kingdom with her husband. Sita was exiled to satisfy the subjects of the empire so that the king might not be accused of setting a bad example to his subjects. The report of Draupadi's marriage with the five Pandavas was circulated only to avert a cruel war immediately after the marriage, to which Karna the evil genius of the Kuru court clearly wanted to incite the young Durjodhana. †

* Chapter XII, verses 129—131.

† Adi Parva, Chapter CCIV, verses 6—21.

There were discussions between Draupadi and Yudhisthira in Bana Parva and after the battle was won when Yudhisthira expressed his unwillingness to ascend the throne due to the cruel massacre of his near and dear relatives and friends on the battlefield, but there was no such conversation between Draupadi and any other Pandava in the whole Mahabharata, except her calling upon Bhima to despatch Kichaka from this world. Bhima has been shown there to have exclaimed as having repaid the debt of his brother. Draupadi's admonition, home-thrusts and hints to strike the conscience of her husband are significant. She told him very sarcastically that she would have suffered for nothing the miseries and calumny of having five husbands as five senses of the body if she could not after all ascend the throne as a queen. She reminded the husband of the assurance of his mother about it. 'But alas! it would have been far better if she had been known to be the wife of one before the world, if you intend not reigning over the kingdom you won after such a struggle'. *

Draupadi and the Pandavas were born for the express purpose of establishing the kingdom of righteousness. Drupad's sons and daughter were the off-shoots of sacrifice and the births of the three Pandavas were the outcome of Pandu's severe penances in the forest before his death. When Yudhisthira † and Arjuna ‡ were born the voices of heaven were heard and the objects of their births were declared. This was given out in the Mahabharata. But nothing could be found about Bhima, Nakul and Sahadeba, who played no important parts in the Epic worthy of heroes. They too were afterthoughts and creations of a later age, with their mother Madri, when the *sati* rite came into vogue.

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* Shanti Parva, Chapter XIV, verses 27—29.
† Shanti Parva, Chapter LXXV, verses 22 and 23.
‡ Udyoga Parva, Chapter XC, verses 65 and 66.

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APPENDIX B.

Professor Lassen, in his 'Indische Alterthumskunde' (II, 499, new edition), considers that it may be proved from an examination of the Introduction to the Mahabharata that there were three consecutive workings-up (bearbeitung) of that poem by different authors. The first or oldest version, called simply Bharata, which contained only 24000 verses, began with the history of Manu, the progenitor of the Kshatriya or military class (Adiparvan 3126), and a short section—describing the pedigree of Vyasa, and how he appeared at the Snake-sacrifice, and how, at the request of Janmejoya he commissioned Vaisampayana to relate the story of the strife between the Pandavas and Kauravas (I, 2208, etc.)—might have formed the introduction (einleitung) to this oldest Bharata. The second reconstruction or recasting of the poem—thought by Professor Lassen to be identical with the Itihasa mentioned in Asvalayana's Grihyasutras, and recited at Saunaka's Horse-sacrifice—took place about 400 B. C. It began with the history of king Vasu, whose daughter Satyavati was mother of Vyasa; and the section called Paushya (I, 661), the antiquity of which is indicated by its being almost entirely in prose, might have served as its introduction. The section called Pauloma (I, 851) probably formed the commencement of the third reconstruction of the great Epic, which he considers must have preceded the era of Asoka.

The following passage from the Vedartha-prakasa of Madhava Acarya (who lived in the fourteenth century) commenting on the Taittiriya Yajurveda (p. 1), translated by Dr. Muir in his Sanskrit Texts, volume iii, page 47, attributes the actual composition of the Mahabharata to the sage Vyasa, and gives a remarkable reason for his having written it:—

'It may be said that all persons whatever, including women and Sudras, must be competent students of the Veda, since the aspiration after good (ishtam me syad iti) and the deprecation of evil are common to all mankind. But it is not so. For though the expedient exists, and women and Sudras are desirous to know it, they are debarred by another cause from being competent students of the Veda. The scripture (sastra) which declares that those persons only who have been invested with the sacrificial cord are competent to read the Veda, intimates thereby that the same study would be a cause of unhappiness to women and Sudras (who are not so invested). How then are these two classes of persons to discover the means of future happiness? We answer, from the Puranas and other such works. Hence it has been said: Since the triple Veda may not be heard by women, Sudras, and degraded twice-born men, the Mahabharata (Bharatam akhyanam) was, in his benevolence, composed (Kritam) by the Muni.'

APPENDIX C.

Quotations from the correspondence of Dr. V. S. Sukthankar, M.A., Ph.D., Editor of the Critical Edition of the Great Epic of India with the author of this book.

"In the versions so far consulted the marriage of Draupadi with the five Pandavas takes place not simultaneously, but one after another.

"The distinct definitions of the prostitutes with four or five husbands (mentioned by Kunti in Ádiparvan Adhyaya 123) are found in all versions.

"Many conjectures have been made to identify the three beginnings of The Mahabharata. Your conjecture is certainly worth considering. I am glad to know your explanation of the stanza.

"Your views are so interesting, and your study of the Mahabharata is evidently so profound that you ought to write a book stating your views and giving the world of scholars the benefit of your erudition. I hope you will fully state in your book why and how you disagree with the views of Western scholars. Such a book is urgently needed and will be keenly appreciated, at best in India, if not all over the world."

The Pioneer Press, Allahabad.—No. 382.—'34.

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The Pioneer Press, Lucknow, No. 199—'34.